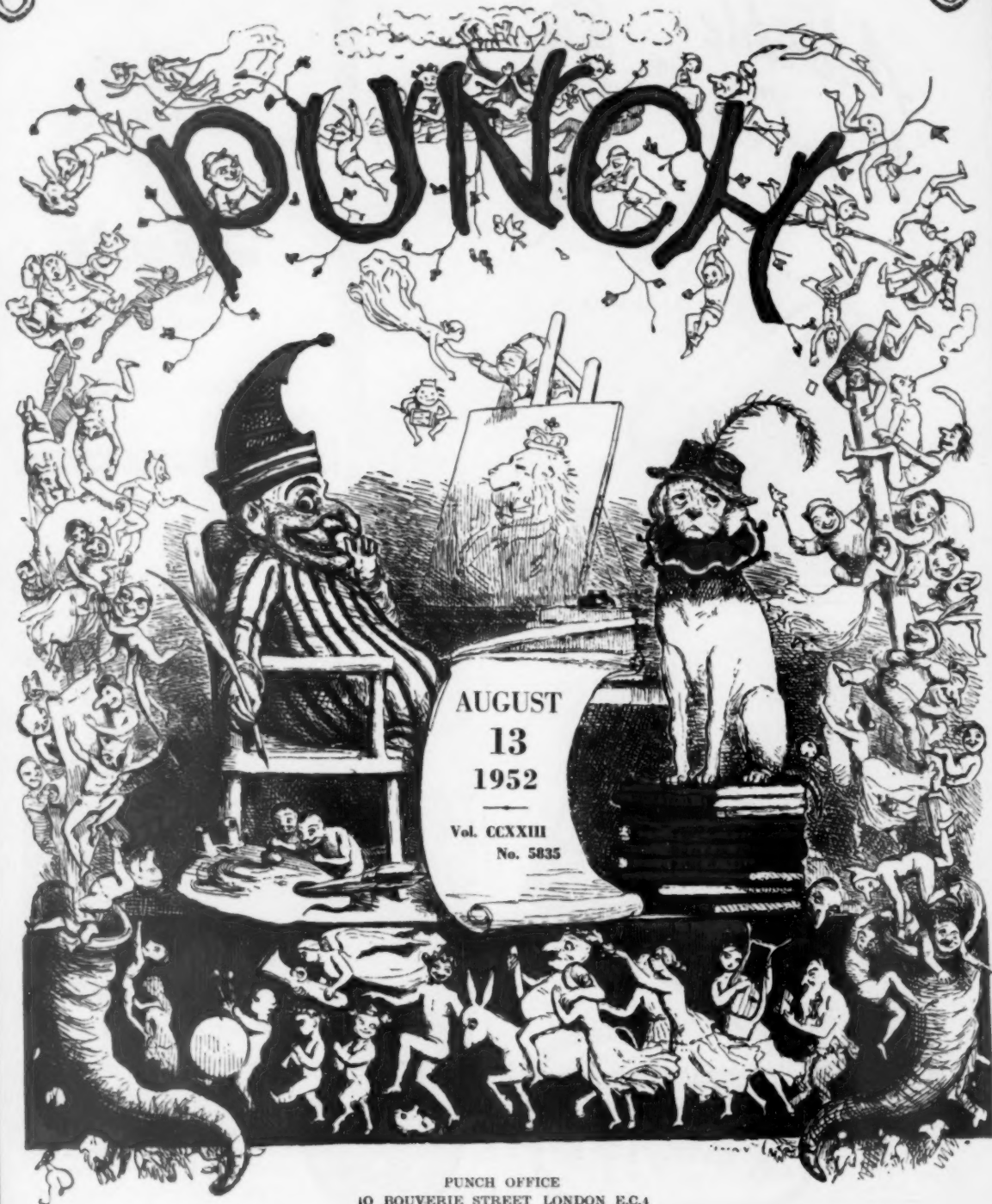


6^p

PUNCH OR THE LONDON CHARTER—WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 13 1952

6^p

PUNCH OFFICE
10 BOUVERIE STREET LONDON E.C.4



—So light and supple
—So neat and fashionable
—So friendly
and flattering to the foot

In finest calf—
in many colours

For the name of your nearest stockist, please write to:
HOLMES OF NORWICH, Shoe Manufacturers, Norwich

Recipe for a
sandwich
delight...



Take two slices of Britain's favourite crispbread... All with a little of almost anything you fancy... and bite. You'll find it the most delicious sandwich you've tried for a long, long time, thanks to the goodness of the golden wheat that makes

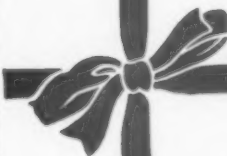
MACVITA

MADE ONLY BY
MEVITT & PRICE LTD.
EDINBURGH - LONDON - MANCHESTER



Lindt

THE
CHOCOLATE
OF THE
CONNOISSEUR



*'A bright and healthy
home in every lin'*

Floors and furniture throughout Britain bear testimony to MANSION'S unvarying quality, the lasting beauty that it creates and the pleasant and hygienic atmosphere it promotes.

MANSION is so easy and economical.

For Dark Floors use **DARK MANSION**

**MANSION
POLISH**

Whenever I see hands in a stocking,
I think: Ah-Aristoc!

Aristoc has a hand in all
the finest stockings. Not surprising—
Aristoc makes nothing else! As well
as Aristoc nylons there is the delightful
Dimsheen—pure silk crêpe...

Aristoc

THE ARISTOCRAT OF STOCKINGS



STAPLES BEDS

The
Finest
Made



Choose your bed
in ideal conditions at—

The London Bedding Centre

Another JOHN PERRING Enterprise

13 Brompton Rd, **KNIGHTSBRIDGE** S.W.3. Phone: KNightsbridge 1777

or from any JOHN PERRING Branch:—

KINGSTON-on-Thames (Main Furniture Showrooms)

WORTHING
OXFORD
CHICHESTER

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STAINES
SLOUGH
READING

EAST SHEEN
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RICHMOND

JACKPANS Ltd
SOUTHEND
HOUNSLOW
GRAYS

WHEREVER YOU
HOLIDAY...



Mind your eyes IN EVERY WAY

The whole success and happiness of your holiday depends on the fitness of your eyes! It's lovely for you to laze—but your eyes can't. They have to work harder than ever. Moreover, they have the added hazards of sun-glare, sand-specks, and unfamiliar infections. So be sure that you have Optrex with you for all minor troubles and holiday eyestrains. And thus give your eyes too, a holiday!

Bathe your eyes once or twice every day while you're away, and you'll learn the value of eye-hygiene all through the years.

Optrex
the EYE LOTION

FROM ALL CHEMISTS 2/6 • 4/4 • 10/-

Buy and use the OPTREX EYE BATH—It fits your eye and fits dust-free over the top of the bottle. Use Optrex Eye Compresses too, for special occasions.



Si ma tante
IF MY
la nageuse, en traversant
AQUATIC AUNT, IN CROSSING
la Manche, avait consommé
THE CHANNEL, HAD CONSUMED
plus de Dubonnet et moins
MORE DUBONNET AND LESS
d'eau de mer, elle serait
SEA WATER, SHE WOULD
arrivée beaucoup plus allègre
HAVE ARRIVED IN A FAR MORE BUOYANT CONDITION

(Remplis le verre de l'héroïne amphibie!)

FILL THE GLASS OF THE AMPHIBIOUS HEROINE!

Have you tried Dubonnet as a long summer drink? Here's how:—Pour a man-sized measure of Dubonnet into a man-sized glass. Top up with soda and toss in a slice of lemon. Add ice if available. Swallow. Delicious! Refill. Swallow. Etcetera.

DUBONNET DOES NOT AFFECT THE LIVER

SOLE DISTRIBUTORS: L. ROSE & CO. LTD., ST. ALBANS, HERTS



PLAYER'S
Nº3

The Quality Cigarette



(3P 111)

Wetherdair Olympix

THE IMPECCABLE WEATHERCOAT

It is cut full throughout. The collar sets naturally in position without pulling and tugging. Sleeves allow the arms to be raised without the coat riding up. Handsome lines. A man's coat, particularly the man who likes his comfort. Price about £15. 15. 0.



WET WETHER WETHERDAIR

There are also Wetherdair Weather Coats from £5. 5. 0.

Fashion Weather Coats in popular colours for ladies.

Also School Coats for kiddies.

WETHERDAIR LTD.

BRADFORD AND LONDON

Glayva

SCOTCH LIQUEUR



A sight to gladden the heart of man!

RONALD MORRISON & CO. LTD., EDINBURGH



Following the advice of the Chancellor of the
Exchequer Acles & Pollack are quite ready to export
or die in the attempt to avoid the second
alternative Acles & Pollack are taking a recent enquiry
from the Fiji Islands for stainless steel tubes very seriously
indeed they are
required for removing the cores from pineapples
which grow there as you know already packed in tins
after a lot of careful preparation these are very popular
with one and all the Directors are now
leading us a merry dance
to get the tubes ready for an early visit to
investigate the problem properly on the spot instead
of just skirting around it.

"Have you a trumpet handy?"
is the title of a book published by Acles & Pollack
which will be sent to anybody who is seriously anxious to
have help through tubes

"With that beard" said the smooth Portuguese,
 "Young ladies are harder to please.
 You should use Blue Gillette
 For the cleanest shave yet
 And you'll bring all the girls to their knees".



ALSO IN 20-BLADE DISPENSER

BUY THE BEST AND SAVE MONEY!

Three Nuns
TOBACCO
NONE NICER

Please do not tease!

Those curious discs of Three Nuns do not need tending—except, perhaps, the few at the top of the pipe bowl. Each disc is a complete blend in itself. Each smokes so slowly that a pipeful of Three Nuns is a delightfully prolonged performance.



ORIGINAL BLEND • EMPIRE BLEND

7301-100

★ Ingram users enjoy comfortable quick shaves, followed by a reassuring, menthol-cool freshness. For Ingram's plentiful lather combines its own face lotion. Share their pleasure by trying Ingram for yourself! You'll find Ingram a great comfort — both to your face and pocket.



*combines its
own face lotion*

A PRODUCT OF BRISTOL-MYERS, LONDON AND NEW YORK

It took 159 years



An engineer checks the setting of a precision tool. The skill of his hands is disciplined by a life habit of precision and fine workmanship, qualities that have made Newton Chambers respected in

the world of industry for seven generations. *At Newton Chambers every present-day development rests on the sure foundation of 159 years of hard-won experience.*

Newton Chambers

& COMPANY LIMITED, THORNCLIFFE, SHEFFIELD

HEAVY CONSTRUCTIONAL ENGINEERING, EXCAVATORS, INDUSTRIAL AND DOMESTIC HEATING APPLIANCES, FUEL ECONOMISERS, IZAL AND OTHER CHEMICAL PRODUCTS.

Professional
Championships
Hushbourne



What are they talking about?

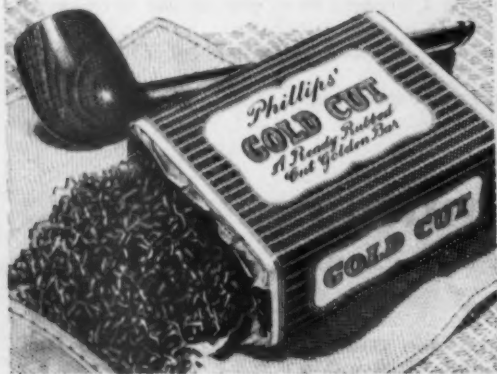
No, they're not talking about the last set. They're talking about Burrough's Gin. People who really understand, and really think about their gin drinks, always prefer Burrough's, because it is triple distilled. This extra refinement makes it soft, smooth and perfectly clean to the palate.

Delicious taken plain, Burrough's Gin also "keeps its place" in even the most delicate cocktails. Price 33/9 per bottle; 17/7 per half-bottle.

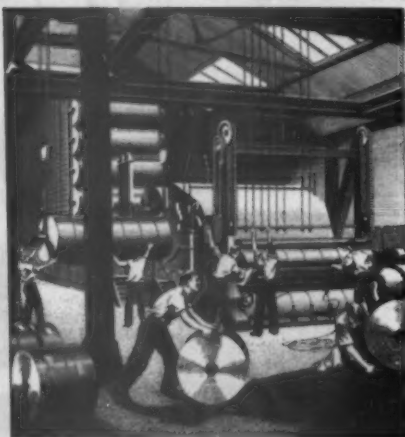


ENJOYED SINCE 1820
BURROUGH'S *Gin*
BEEFEATER IT IS TRIPLE DISTILLED!
JAMES BURROUGH & CO., LTD. SOLE DISTILLERS. RUTTOR ROAD, S.E.11

A NEW old-style pipe tobacco at 4/- an ounce



ISSUED BY GOFFREY PHILLIPS LIMITED



a vital industry

The Thames Board Mills' story is one of vision and enterprise. Here is an organization known wherever British-made "cardboard" is used; proud to be the largest of its kind in the British Empire. Here, modern craftsmen, with their mammoth machines, transform tiny fibres into thousands of tons of "THAMES BOARD" a week. Large reels, small reels, sheets of many sizes, white, brown, grey and coloured—vital board to pack millions of pounds-worth of British goods or to bind books and to make ceilings and walls in buildings of all kinds. Food, soap, clothing, footwear, medical supplies, hardware, electrical apparatus—all manner of goods—need the protection of cartons made from "THAMES BOARD," plus (of course) "FIBERITE" PACKING CASES, to get them safely to market.

THAMES BOARD MILLS LTD. PURFLEET, ESSEX

Manufacturers of

"THAMES BOARD" for cartons and other uses;
"FIBERITE" Packing Cases; "ESSEX" Wallboard.

(Mills at Purfleet, Essex & Warrington, Lancs.)

With the Compliments
OF
**Schweppshire
Post**

'Post's' Peephole
on Schweppshire
in Shirtsleeves.

Happy
Holidays
are
Here!

HOPS DESTROYED BY LIGHTNING

CROWD WASHED OUT

By Freak Storm
SEA SCOUTS MAROONED IN COVE

Crops are now past sowing in many parts of Schweppshire. The holiday sporting programme has been ruined and the roads were crowded yesterday with disappointed holiday-makers trooping back from flooded coastal resorts and bathing beaches where giant waves have wrecked bathing huts and spread an amazing melée of condemned slot machines, deck quilts, old second-hand bathing

towels and retired naval men five hundred yards inland.

Setting Lotion in Cream Buns

RESORTS WARNED

Many little ones were taken to hospital after the Orphans' Outing last Wednesday. Each had eaten only fifteen of these confections when the leader of the troop complained that she was unable to remove her Browne sombrero.

GRISLY FIND

IN FESTIVAL
"WELL OF TRUTH"

Human Jawbone lodged in Wall
Foul Play Suspected

Amateur detectives were wondering whether there was any connection between this incident and the finding of an unidentified gold tooth in a margarine tin in Schwepton Mallet Reservoir.

Bungalow Blaze

NEXT TO PETROL STORE

Disatisfied bathing-machine attendants have put the charming little cove of East Schweppshire under a

reign of terror during the past fortnight. Peaceful holiday-makers have been promiscuously attacked with knotted bathing costumes or pelted with old cuttlefish by inflamed malcontents.

Quadruple Crash

HOLIDAY CHARABANC
BUCKLED

Boy Buried Head Down in Sand Castle—Will Survive
Four hours' artificial respiration were administered to Tony Rôul, recently cut out of waddy uncle's will. Ailing Rôul had earlier been shaken when with thirteen other little ones he narrowly escaped cliff fall on Lido of Schweppington-Schwupper-Mare.

INSPECTOR STRANDYLEFT No. 423



MORRIS DANCING round Schweppherb's Dish

In Midsummer Months
the Holland House (Action)
Society moves from leafy
Lima Grove for the green
beats in whose greater
spaciousness the difficult 3/4
and complex 10/16 rhythms
are interestingly attempted
(G. Schwaer, F.R.S.S. on right)

don't let
Chilled Feet, Flangere,
Singing Mitten,
Purple-pink, Bathers,
Hunt Poley
take the edge
of your Holiday
mile with **PP** Schweppherb's

Written by Stephen Potter. Drawn by Lewis-Hill

'ENGLISH ELECTRIC'

How many housewives know the joy of working in a really modern kitchen? How many know the advantages of a refrigerator, a food mixer, a washing machine, or a really up-to-date cooker? The simple answer is 'not nearly enough!' To help meet this demand 'ENGLISH ELECTRIC', as one of the world's largest electrical organizations, is using its unique resources to equip more housewives with more modern domestic appliances.



bringing you

By continuous research on new labour-saving ideas, by the conversion of these ideas into practical household appliances of the highest quality and by the production of those appliances on a large scale, 'ENGLISH ELECTRIC' is contributing to the better living of families all over the world.

In this and countless other ways 'ENGLISH ELECTRIC' puts the power of electricity at the service of millions.



better



living

The ENGLISH ELECTRIC Company Limited, Queens House, Kingsway, London, W.C.2

.. say Bulmer's for cider

Bulmer's ..

- Is refreshing and sustaining
- Sparkles with goodness
- Is excellent value



2½ lbs. of apples to every flagon

H. P. BULMER & CO. LTD., HEREFORD

**BOTTLED
VINEGAR**
is best for
pickling!



and this is the
**BEST BOTTLED
VINEGAR**

Ornery ornithologist becomes an early bird



Poor Aunt Gertrude. Once, she knew the habits of countless birds in the bush, but, lately, she's done nothing but grouse. "Cuckoo," I said. "How are our feathered friends?"

"In sanctuary, as far as I'm concerned," cawed Aunt G. "I've lost me enthusiasm for watchin'. When you're constipated like me you don't feel like clickin' a candid camera at a Common Sandpiper. It can do its pipin' in peace."

"Your piping," I said, "is obviously at war."

"Eh?" squawked Aunt G.

"I'm referring," I said, "to the 30-ft. length of piping you have in your inside, which everything you eat has to go through. But all these starchy foods we eat now don't give your intestinal muscles anything to get hold of. With those muscles not working properly, your system gets the bird."

"What bird?" quailed Aunt G.

"The Red-eyed Crosspatch!" I said. "Genus Colon in Extremis."

In other words, you get constipated. I can see that I shall have to introduce you to bulk."

"To what?" croaked Aunt G. "To wit," I said, "Kellogg's All-Bran. If you have a little for breakfast every day, it'll give those muscles of yours the bulk they need, and get you 'regular' in a few days."

"Oh, for the wings of a dove," cried Aunt G., and flew.

The next time I saw her, Aunt G. was looking as if she'd just discovered a Dodo. "Well!" I chirruped. "You are in fine feather."

"I'm feelin' marvellous," cooed Aunt G. "That All-Bran made me 'regular' in four days. Who told you about it?"

"A little bird," I said.

WHY KELLOGG'S ALL-BRAN SURELY AND GENTLY BELIEVES CONSTIPATION

Known with absolute regularity, Kellogg's All-Bran gives your system "bulk," to prevent constipation. All-Bran's "bulk" enables bowel muscles to keep naturally active and so to sweep and clear the intestinal tract, thoroughly and regularly. Result: your whole body keeps fresh and active, and you are always physically and mentally alert. All-Bran is delicious for breakfast, or in lumps or cubes. All grocers have it.

2 ways to a WARMER WINTER!



To warm your home or office comfortably from Autumn onwards is going to be a problem for two reasons.

Fuel supplies and every other kind of heating will be both scarce and dear. But sadder still will be the inevitable loss of much of the warmth you do obtain—thrown away and wasted long before you can make full use of it.

Why should this happen? Simply because heat can escape from a building in various ways almost as quickly as it is created. The two main routes are **through draughty doors and windows** and, because warm air always rises—**through the roof!**

What a needless waste of precious heat and fuel! How can it be prevented?

DRAUGHT-EXCLUSION by HERMESEAL will **drastically reduce** the heavy loss through badly fitting doors and windows; efficient **ROOF-INSULATION** by HERMESEAL will **contain** the warmth so saved. Together they will conserve so much more heat from present fuel supplies and make your home a better place to live in.

Two new ways to a warmer Winter—Yes! but call us in not later on but now, before the colder weather comes again.

Our own surveyor is at your service

DRAUGHT EXCLUSION AND ROOF INSULATION BY



BRITISH HERMESEAL LTD., Head Office 4 PARK LANE, LONDON, W.1

Telephone: GROsvener 4324 (3 lines)

AND BRANCHES.

look in before the holidays

whenever and wherever you're going this year look in first at your local garage with the SHELL and BP sign. Have a quick check-over for oil, tyres, brakes, petrol: make sure there's nothing faulty; nothing which will let you down and spoil your holiday.



If you haven't already done so, change NOW to Shell X-100 Motor Oil—the great new oil that fights Acid Action, main cause of engine wear. With Shell X-100 Motor Oil, your engine is *constantly* protected against wear caused by harmful combustion acids. Shell X-100 Motor Oil improves engine performance. Ask for the grade recommended for your car.

you have good neighbours
under the SHELL and BP sign



A SPOKESMAN of the British Electricity Authority has assured us that the projected exchange of electrical facilities between this country and the Continent doesn't mean that the lights will be going out all over Europe.

~ ~

Numismatists lament a decline in collecting old coins. Collecting old notes is still booming.

~ ~

By the successful hatching of nine eggs at the headquarters of the Severn Wildfowl Trust, the Hawaiian goose or Ne-ne, probably the second or third rarest bird in the world, has been narrowly saved from extinction. Now there are ni-ne new Ne-nes instead of no-ne.

~ ~

It is clear from the advertisement pages of motoring journals that the country's best engineering brains are at work on a vital problem—that of easing the burden of present high petrol costs for the ordinary motorist. Considerable success has been achieved already. The fitting of an overdrive at once slashes consumption by 19 per cent, and the right brand of sparking-plug by another 10 per cent; a distribution rectifier (says a signed testimonial from a customer, Mr. J. O., London) ensures a further reduction of 30 per cent—a splendid step forward—and the employment of a fuel additive and an upper cylinder lubricant account for 20 per cent

and 6 per cent, respectively. This total to date of an 85 per cent saving in petrol consumed is an impressive one. Laboratory research has only to eliminate that outstanding 15 per cent and we shan't very much care what we're charged for the stuff.

~ ~

"What shall I find in the United States to make my journey worth while? Plenty. No doubt about that."—*A Sunday columnist*

Well, that's what we're all looking for.

~ ~

There has been unnecessary speculation on the reason why a junior Minister, shortly after leaving the House recently, appeared at a cocktail party and sang "Because." Obviously, he had been more than usually deliberate in framing his answer to some awkward Supplementary Question.

~ ~

An advertisement in the *British Songwriter* offers "Standard Tune Titles—Over 2,000 Titles of well-known songs giving you an indication of what not to call your songs. Price 1s. 1d. Post Free." Well, it's a start, anyway.

~ ~

It is revealed in a letter to *The Times* that the favourite food of a well-known mountaineer is a large bowl of semolina. "He eats this," continues the writer,



21



217



BUGLE

"first hot then cold, on expeditions and even at home, saying that this way nothing ever goes wrong. Judging by his performance on Everest there must be something in it." Exactly what remains a secret.

Writing in the *Observer* on family shopping problems Alison Settle says that the future in food salesmanship may be ruled by "open-shelf self-service shops." Mrs. Settle is to be congratulated on saying this: we've only tried.

It is pointed out by an American paper that the slogan as an election weapon continues to sway tremendous numbers of voters, whether it takes the form of a simple catch-phrase or a pun on some song-title, however outmoded. Party organizers in Britain are already preparing suitable material for the next campaign on this side of the Atlantic, Socialist

gag-men being sharply divided on the comparative merits of "Climb with Clem" and "Ours is a Nye's House, ours is."

From a British European Airways publicity parchment:

"TO ALL VOYAGERS BEYOND THE SEAS—WHEREAS it pleaseth many goodes citizens to voyage to partes beyonde the see in greute shippes of the air AND WHEREAS it hath long been the principall honour of craftsmen of this realme to fashion these shippes of the air more fleetly than any other Christian Nation AND WHEREAS sithence the comynge and reign of our Most Sovereigne and dear ladye queen Elizabeth II it chanceth that we the governour and Companye elect of the bodye hight BRITISH EUROPEAN AIRWAYS must duly make manifest proclamation of a newe shippe of the air named:

ELIZABETHAN

SO LET IT BE KNOWN to all men who doe purpose to travel to forraine partes the qualitie & peculiar merite which the Elizabethan doth possess IT EM the Elizabethan flyeth fleetly than other shippes & covereth two hundred and forty-five miles or moe than fourscore leagues within the single houre IT EM the Elizabethan thus flyeth to the cite of Paris in one houre and one quarter onely IT EM the Elizabethan carryeth . . ."

Roger, oute.



"There's Dad's blue-striped shirt; and my pink pen-fare; and oh look—there's your yellow pullover coming round again . . ."

FROM A SOCCER CORRESPONDENT'S NOTEBOOK

LAY-OUT for mid-August preliminary article:

Start. Expect greatest season yet . . . Twenty million poolsters already sharpening pencils . . . Massed multitudes . . . Soaring transfer fees . . . The game we taught the world.

Middle. All teams reporting for duty . . . Players keyed up . . . Who is for Wembley/promotion/relegation/championship? . . . Answer in April/May . . . Joke about Chelsea (see 1947 file, mid-August) . . . Watch Arsenal (Rangers/Celtic for Scottish edition, Newcastle for Northern) . . . Whither England/Scotland/Wales? (Mem. Check Welsh circulation figures.)

End. Tribute to crowds/referees/linesmen/masseurs . . . Future remains to be seen . . . Greatest of games. (Mem. Ask Sports Editor to play down Test Match.)

General notes for season:

Christian names for full internationals only. Inverted commas unnecessary. (Mem. Warn Chief Sub.)

More verbs this year. Compounds useful—e.g. trick-dribble, baffle-swerve, pressure-relieve.

Custodian, janitor too pre-war. Suggest handling-man, sentinel. (Mem. "He slipped by the sentinel" very pretty.)

Two articles only on transfer fees. Attitude: benevolent neutrality.

Hold usual Stanley Matthews feature for mid-season. (Mem. Keep phrase "The Old Remarkable"

for F.A.'s ninetieth birthday, October '53.) Soccer-Rugby controversy, with correspondence, good fill for February.

After Wembley: Welcome Australia . . . Five million poolsters sharpening pencils. . .

ERIC WALMSLEY

I WENT AS RED AS A LOBSTER

WE were sitting outside the Café de la Paix, on the pavement. On chairs, I mean, at a table.

The other elderly Englishman glanced inquiringly up the Boulevard des Capucines, found no answer there, and then frowned at the Place de l'Opéra.

"I have often wondered," he said, "exactly what the difference is between *homard* and *langouste*."

My heart began to beat violently, but I don't think I betrayed any emotion.

"In dictionaries," he went on, "they always say: 'Homard (m.): lobster.' And when you think yes but what about *langoustes*?—they say: 'Langouste (f.), lobster.'"

He looked angrily up the Boulevard des Capucines, and very curtly at the Place de l'Opéra. He didn't look at me at all.

I had been waiting for this moment since 1938. It was in that year that I began to study Larousse really seriously.

"I think I know the answer to that," I said. "They are both lobsters, actually, but the *langouste* differs from the *homard* in that it has no sort of pincer things. *Pinces*, the French call them. It also has a much rougher shell than the *homard*, and is considerably bigger. It—"

"I see," said the man thoughtfully. "Yes, I see."

"I could draw them for you if you like," I said.

"Oh, that's all right," he said. He turned and looked at me with a sort of boyish eagerness which I found very attractive.

"I say," he said, "you seem to be pretty well up in this kind of thing. I suppose you don't happen to know exactly what a *langoustine* is, by any chance?"

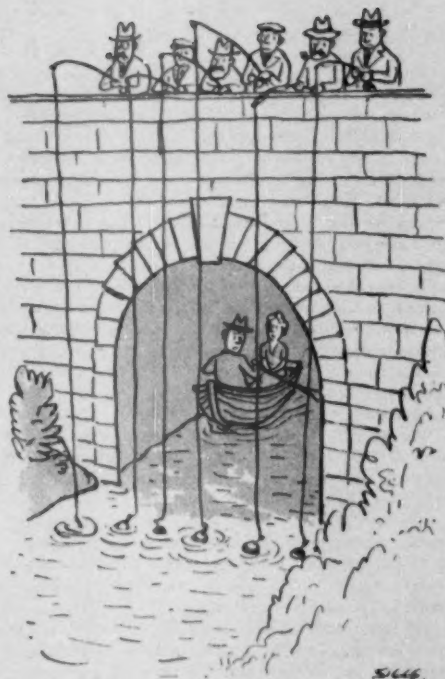
A heavy cloud descended on my mind. I felt as, many years ago, I had felt when confronted by a solid block of Victor Hugo.

What on earth did Larousse say about *langoustines*? Were they, for that matter (m.) or (f.)? I decided to risk it.

"The *langoustine*," I began confidently, "is only a smaller *langouste*. It's very much the same sort of thing as *poule* and *poularde*, really." I looked at the Place de l'Opéra and the Boulevard des Capucines, but I did not look at the man.

He, however, looked at me intently.

"Would you care to bet on that?" he asked keenly—and there was a glitter in his eye that I didn't like at all. His boyishness had disappeared; he looked much older, and rather evil.



"I believe you're expected to wait until they catch something."

"Well," I replied uncertainly, "I don't know that I—"

"We'll soon see," said this abominable old man. He reached down and picked his brief-case off the pavement.

It was with a feeling of utter hopelessness that I watched him pull a Larousse out of the brief-case and thumb swiftly through it.

"*Langoustine* (m.)," he read, hatefully. "*Nom vulgaire d'une espèce de homard*"—he paused, and looked at me malevolently—"de petite taille."

He snapped the dictionary shut. "I thought I'd catch you on that," he said.

"Detective-chief-inspector Harry Power said that after seeing Jalaja in hospital he went to his lodgings in Patrick Street and found an envelope addressed to 'Criminal Police, Cardiff.'"

It contained a long statement in Etonian, some X-ray photographs and a set of dentures.—*South Wales Echo*

They'd find someone at Hendon to translate all right.

THE RIVER RIVALS

THE older residents of Liverpool and Birkenhead, of whom not a few remain, must be smiling rather wryly at all the to-do over the Atlantic rivalry of the *United States* on the one side and the two *Cunard Queens* on the other. It will seem very small beer indeed to them after the memorable duel late last century for the Blue Riband of the Mersey, between the Liverpool Water Traction Company and the Birkenhead Boating Corporation.

It may be necessary to remind the reader that each concern operated a trans-Mersey ferry service, allowing each other full berthing facilities for the turn-round. This concession included unbridled use of rope-handlers, bollards, ticket-collectors, turnstiles and cab-touts, and friendliness between the two sets of directors was nothing short of rife.

Then the Liverpool Water Traction Company—or the L.W.T.C., as it was by this time called—whose ferryboat had been slowly disintegrating for some years (the more combustible portions were regarded as regular “perks” by all local beachcombers with riparian rights), took the underhand step of ordering a faster, more modern vessel without either notifying or consulting the Birkenhead Boating Corporation (the B.B.C.).

The new river greyhound was slipped unobtrusively into service, and when, on her maiden voyage, she clipped five minutes—or six, if we can bring ourselves to accept the church clock as an authority—off the previous best time a rather beautiful friendship was at an end.

Liverpudlians were not slow to grasp the fact that the new service gave them an extra ten—or twelve—minutes a day to devote to work or pleasure according to fancy, and the B.B.C. clients dwindled in number until it was often necessary for their craft to carry ballast. There were many stormy shareholders' meetings, and at length, after innumerable shouts of “Resign! Resign!” it was decided that the B.B.C. must also have a new boat—a better, swifter boat than the L.W.T.C.'s acquisition.

The love lost between the rival directors was by this time negligible. They no longer waved cheerily to one another when they passed in mid-stream, and interchange of Christmas cards was curtailed to an almost unbelievable extent. All berthing facilities had been withdrawn by both sides, except for the bare use of the landing-stage to come alongside at a rather exorbitant *per capita* charge, and when the L.W.T.C. accidentally fractured a bollard on Birkenhead pier (the captain had ordered starboard-twenty, but the helmsman happened to be left-handed) the B.B.C., instead of laughing it off, sent in a four-figure bill that is still dragging through the courts.

The B.B.C. made no secret of their plan for regaining the crossing record. The new boat was completed, named in finest vintage champagne, and

put through her trials. The great day came. The ship lay at her berth ready for the attempt.

Often before and since has Birkenhead been a sight; but never such a sight as it presented that morning, with flags flying, the streets festooned with festoons, and encouraging mottoes such as “Well Done, All!” gracing every doorway. The waterfront was thronged with friends and well-wishers jostling the starter—a neutral from Hull—as he stood, pistol raised, studying his stop-watch.

The shot rang out. The mate shouted to the hands to cast off. The captain stood tensely at the wheel, trusting it to nobody but himself. A great shout of excitement swelled, and a vast shower of paper streamers whirled out from the quay and fell over the graceful craft.

Nothing happened! The ship stayed where she was. Her engines roared and throbbed, her mighty paddles raced desperately, the captain madly sawed the wheel this way and that, but she did not move. She was held to the quay by the mesh of paper streamers, as fast as a bluebottle in a spider's web.

The so-called paper streamers were not the innocent carnival novelties they seemed. They were rolls of gummed paper, such as are used for sealing packages in package-sealing circles—hundred upon hundred of them, all dyed gay festival colours. The apparent crowd of friends and well-wishers who had thrown them were in reality hirelings in the pay of the L.W.T.C.

It took the ship's company, armed with knives, forks, axes, blow-lamps, belaying-pins and anything they could lay hands on, an hour and forty minutes to hack the ship free, and the voyage, when finally completed, still holds the record for the longest time since the introduction, hotly contested at the time, of steam to the Mersey.

It need hardly be said that on her second voyage paper streamers were barred to one and all, and the ship beat the existing Birkenhead-Liverpool time handsomely. But it was not the same. The Blue Riband of the Mersey was the B.B.C.'s, but, like Dead Sea Fruit, it turned to ashes in their mouths and their teeth were set on edge.

It is not surprising that the coolness between the two companies continued undiminished until the construction of the Mersey Tunnel, which is there to this day.

COLIN HOWARD

6 6

GENIUS

A SCIENTIST living at Staines
Is searching with infinite pains
For a new type of sound
Which he hopes, when it's found,
Will travel much faster than planes.



DEFENCE AND NATIONAL ECONOMY

"No good making it heavier than you can handle, John."

MIGHT HAVE BIN

I AM anxious, in these grave times, to describe the disaster that has overwhelmed my coal bin and the steps I am going to take to set it right.

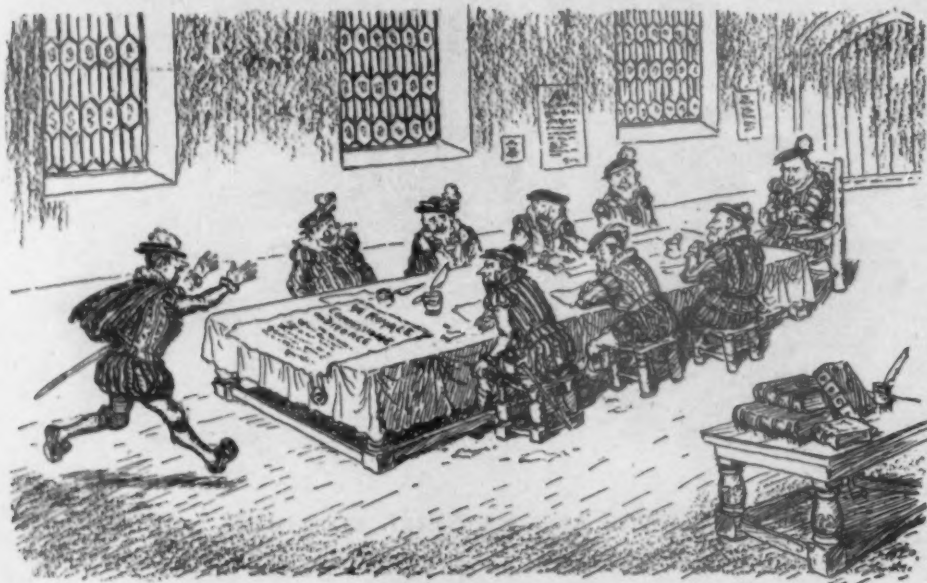
But bin is not the right word. A bin is metallic, to my mind and ear, and either circular or rectangular in plan, with (in the latter case) a sloping roof. It contains meal, bread, rubbish, or coal. The term cannot properly be applied to a wooden construction consisting of a front, one side and a top, slope its roof never so shrewdly.

The correct name for such a contrivance, even if you count in the section of fence and portion of garage-wall that form its second side and back respectively, I have never known. It is not a shed, for a shed stands in its own grounds, has a roof that rises to an apex and descends again on the other side, and is entered by a door in the front. Nor is it a lean-to, which has

a door at the side opening inwards and controlled by a metal thumb-piece pivoted about a fulcrum. Pressure on the thumb-piece causes a severely oxidized bar to rise out of a slot, and kicking against the lower edge of the door does the rest. No such apparatus is fixed to this coal thing of mine, entry being neither feasible nor desirable. Coal is poured in through the top, after the removal of a sawn-off section of the roof, and is scooped out again through a hole in the front, of the kind used by poultry but larger and higher up.

Such, in brief, is the thing that holds my coal, and very vexing it is not to be able to put a name to it. Nobody ever told me during my formative years. Nurses I had, early on, and a long and expensive education to follow, with ushers and university graduates and here and there a professor crowding in on me before I was through with it; and a

wonderful lot of the right names for things they taught me between them. I can't list them all here, but it isn't too much to say that I know the name for the square projection in the upper part of a cornice, having a deep vertical face, generally plain, and with its soffit or under-surface recessed so as to form a "drip" which prevents water from running down the building. It is a "corona," in case the subject should crop up down your way. I also know that the "Cottabos" was a game, much in vogue among the young people of Ancient Greece, in which wine was thrown from a goblet into a metal basin set at an agreed distance. The thing to do was not to spill any of the wine in transit, and what is more you could tell, from the clarity or otherwise of the ringing tone given out by the metal basin as the wine struck it, whether you were beloved or not. The game has gone out, in

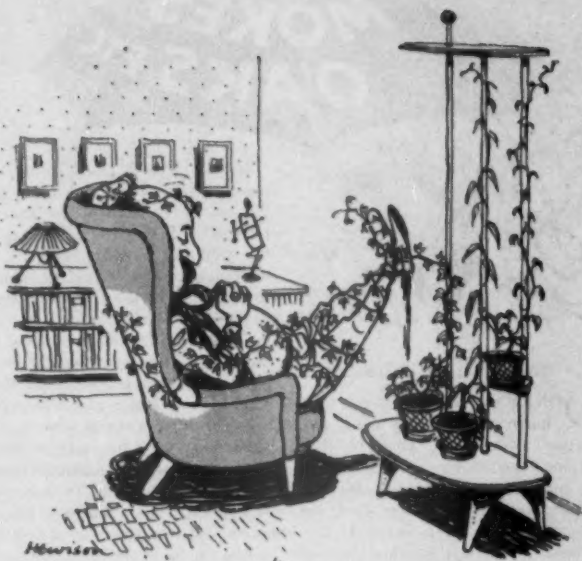


"We had better alter our findings. Henry has just made it up with Kate."

favour of the less rompiash pastime of blowing seeds off dandelion heads, and was not even included at Helsinki. But it was a good game and capable of many variations. In the de luxe Cottabos set you had two metal basins hanging down at opposite ends of a pivoted wooden bar, in the manner of scales, and underneath each basin was a vessel full of water with a bronze statue submerged in it. We shall see nothing like this in the shops at Christmas time. Class players could discharge their goblets so cunningly into one or other of the basins that it came down plumb, under the weight of the effluent, and struck against the head of the statue, giving out, I suppose, a dull, watery note. And how those Athenians cheered!

I only mention these things to show the kind of information my nurses and professors thought it desirable that I should acquire. It does not seem to have crossed their minds that I might want to refer, in after years, to a one-sided wooden erection for storing coal. I am glad, in a way, to know what a corona is, architecturally speaking, but feel bound to point out that my coal container has no such projection in the upper part of its cornice—nor, for that matter, does it give out a ringing tone when wine or coal is thrown into it from an agreed distance. I wish it did. It would greatly please me to hear the coal-man cry out "Aha! I am beloved," after a particularly shrewd cast. I would bury a small bronze statue under the slack, and damn the expense, if I thought it would add in any way to the interest of what is at best a drab and monotonous task. But as things are, it is almost impossible to turn my knowledge of the amusements of Ancient Greece to account *vis-à-vis* my coal receptacle.

No one need think, because "corona" and "Cottabos" happen to begin with the same letter, that my education was limited in some way to the earlier volumes of an encyclopædia. It was, in its way, alphabet-wide. I know that hebdomadal means "weekly" and might with advantage be printed on the



cover of this journal, and I am equally familiar with sesterces and Zeugma. My complaint is not that my education was narrow—one could not fairly say that of a course of study that embraced the Latin for the back of the knee and the Greek for a bath-attendant—but that it was to some extent impractical. And to be practical, in these

grave times, is all. A man is badly handicapped in life's race if he cannot tell what his one-sided wooden coal coffer should properly be called.

In what way? Well, for one thing he cannot get around to describing the disaster that has overwhelmed it and the steps he proposes to take to set it right.

H. F. ELLIS

ONE-MAN FARM

I WORK a one-man farm in Slaithwaite: my farm has but one field. I plaitwaite in Saxon lynchets (to allaithwaite proper crop-rotation). Naithwaite bears beet, pens, wheat, grass, and one caithwaite won't support two—and a saithwaite has nine piglings. Ee, by gaithwaite is by the sweat of my own braithwaite shows a profit. Aye, and haithwaite does, caps all t'farming chaps i' Slaithwaite!

R. C. SCRIVEN



Going Soft at Cuckfield

DONKEY racing differs from horse racing in at least two major particulars. One is that neither the backer nor the bookie is plagued by those jaw-cracking names favoured by the Turf (as opposed to the Tussocks): here this afternoon, in the meadow behind "The Wheatsheaf," are none of your Kikuyus or Doniazades or Hoo-sharars, but only animals named with refreshing bluntness—The Thing, Snooker, Jacob's Moke, Crooked Elbow. And there is, by the way, a marked trend towards such culinary christenings as Irish Stew, Steak and Kidney, Salami, Veal and Ham. Intentionally or not, this serves as a reminder that, but for the warm hearts of The Donkey Club's founder members, many of to-day's sleek and spirited runners would by now have been translated into cat and dog meat, a last humiliation to end a history of bitter privations. The Club made its start by buying up an import consignment of the hapless little beasts some two hundred strong; and racing under Donkey Club rules, which promises to take Sussex by storm, is only one method of exposing this deplorable traffic and bringing sweetness and light to long-oppressed Donkeydom. Many of the two hundred were coaxed back to health, but not all: an obituary notice in the current issue of *The Donkey Times* (published spasmodically) has a certain poignancy:

"Tottery Tom passed peacefully away at Lone Barn, at a great age. At rest in the land of the Eternal Carrot." Fortunately, the gap in the ranks is already filled, as an announcement higher up the column indicates: "Births. To Lone Barn Lollipop, a lovely Jenny."

The second point to be noted by racegoers who have so far concentrated on the horse is that form studying and stable gossip are even less dependable than usual. A donkey reported by early morning spies to be making sensational times along the foot of the Downs may well decide, when he has your pound note on his nose, to stick to a dreamy amble, while some despised outsider, whose practice gait has been a mere shuffle, will flash away at a good eight miles an hour and lead the field home in an unflagging sprint which amazes the owner and petrifies the jockey. Why, this very afternoon we are to see no less renowned an animal than Mr. Peter Bowring's Methuselah—victor in the recent Wivelsfield Hundred Guineas over such doughty challengers as

Cuckoo, The Drip, Shaky Shelley, a Park View Pete and many more—fail to make the first three in the Mokes Oaks field of a mere eight runners. Very chancy indeed.

For the rest, to-day's meeting has most of the familiar elements of flat-racing proper. All the traditional amenities are here, if in a somewhat scaled-down form. The grandstands in the Members' Enclosure are a couple of flat-topped farm wagons of suitable strategic height. The paddock is a small, uneven hollow of coarse grass, backed by a venerable barn and adjoining a hen-run. The course, three furlongs at full exploitation, curls dramatically into a last fifty-yard straight. The starter, who travels about in the trimmest of donkey-carts, a poker-backed groom beside him, is as stern a disciplinarian as any at Sandown or Kempton Park.

The bookies exhibit all the professional keenness of better-known meetings, their patter as incomprehensible, their voices as penetratingly keyed, their umbrellas as gay, their blackboard-and-chalk work as lightning-deft as any at Epsom, Ascot or Newmarket. At the rails, in (on?) the grandstands, gathered into close knots outside the Clerk of the Course's tent, the public speculates over its race-cards with





proper solemnity, exchanging the latest bits of information straight from the donkey's mouth. "She's a most extraordinarily fine jenny," says a scrubbed, white-haired, aggressively-moustached man of almost scarifying elegance, tapping his card authoritatively. "Back her. Can't miss. Know the owner. Saw her in the Slugwash Sellin' Stakes, Wivelsfield. Very fine jenny indeed." A pretty woman on a shooting-stick leans forward to ask with a frown "Oats-fed?" and nods knowingly at the whispered reply...

It should be mentioned that we began in rain. That's putting it mildly. We began in an implacable, malevolent, blinding downpour that filled our shoes, streamed off our hats, drenched the riders and bounced off the runners, turned the car-park into a quagmire, blotted out the friendly Downs and threatened not to abate until it had washed the whole course down into the Ouse Valley. It should be mentioned, if only because any organization with a less unquenchable spirit than The Donkey Club would have called the thing off before the starters so much as went down for the first race. As it is, their courage has been rewarded, and although the loud-speaker has announced periodic changes of colours, as one jockey's mother after another has snatched off a soaked velvet cap and miraculously produced a dry replacement—all the riders are children: one of the Club's aims is to end excessive weight-carrying by donkeys everywhere—the sun has made its blessed appearance in time for the last few races, and everyone steams happily; this includes the donkeys, which, under the approving eye of a uniformed officer of the

R.S.P.C.A., have between events been conscientiously rubbed down, blanketed and exercised in the saddling enclosure—where, humanely again, there isn't a saddle to be seen, because all riding is bareback.

Riding a donkey bareback is no joke. If it comes to that, riding a donkey is no joke anyway. As the runners go down to the starting post for the last race ("On the big event!" yell the bookies. "On the big event!") their riders have a thoughtful look as they wonder what excesses of volatility are to occur between their knees before they cover the same ground in the opposite direction. No. 3, Lone Barn Farouk, is already playing up a little, and tipples off his rider with a shrewd sideways twitch as he passes the grandstand. At about the same time, No. 4, Irish Stew, comes to a resolute halt, and his jockey, a flushed child with plaits, only persuades him into motion again with the aid of a few volunteer spectators. Those of us who have heard a good deal of optimistic talk about Irish Stew, and have

acted accordingly, tell ourselves that he is simply conserving his energies; he is plainly a donkey of character, and his decision to stroll to the start with a complacent leisureliness which only just gets him there in time to save the starter from a mild apoplexy, suggests to his admirers that he—

But they're off at last. To a good start. Presently, bunched, they come jogging round the bend. The crowd roars. Some of it roars "Irish Stew!" but there is no glimpse yet of the white shirt and yellow sash on which our hopes are pinned. Now someone breaks away briskly... Lindfield Fayre, they say it is... he's in the lead, going sturdily... see that! he's actually cantering... he can't lose now... he can't... he doesn't. Second, Crooked Elbow. Third, Crown Jewel. Then a long gap before Lone Barn Farouk appears, riderless... Rainbow... Methuselah, still short of his Wivelsfield form... Steak and Kidney... Bull Bashier...

And, at last, when the judge has put away his glasses and climbed down from the platform, Irish Stew rounds the bend, coming up as he went down, at a steady saunter, unmoved by threats, entreaties or half-affectionate, half-exasperated slaps on his tawny flanks.

A donkey of character, indeed, Irish Stew. An ass, as Surtees would have said, without being a fool. Tottery Tom, one feels, must be proud of him, looking down.

J. B. BOOTHROYD



A NEW LIFE FOR LUCY

"WHAT," said Mrs. Venner, panting into the flatlet after a losing battle with the stairs, "do you think about Lucy?"

I picked up another piece of toast and buttered it carefully, playing for time.

"Gone and give it all up!" exclaimed Mrs. Venner, sinking into the comfortable chair and placing an arm across her heaving jumper. "Just like that!"

"Er—really?" I said, rapidly racking my brains.

"All the lot," said Mrs. Venner emphatically. She pulled from beneath her a classical dictionary and a freshly-darned maroon sock, and tossed them dramatically on to the divan. "Finished Saturday second house, got the first train, and landed on me in the middle of the night. Didn't you hear her break that window, getting into the back kitchen?"

"No," I said.

Mrs. Venner eased off one of her shoes. "Of course," she said, "as I told her, you can't afford to be fool-hardy these days or if you're not on the look-out you're going to come a cropper in the long run. It's not as if it was like during the war, when you could make nuts and bolts and that and go about in motor-cars. I mean, you've got to weigh it up before you do anything drastic, haven't you?"

"Well, yes," I said. "I suppose you—"

"Nobody's going to say," proceeded Mrs. Venner, "that it's all honey on the boards, for a minute. I'll never forget my Uncle Herbert in a hurry, never. Him and his pal was the two Topper Twins—ugly as sin the pair of them. Used to do balancing on top of one another's heads, playing on them little flutes you hold sideways. Know what happened to him? Caught his death in Newcastle, sitting in a draught. We had his flute for ages after, up on the mantelpiece, but no one never had the heart to blow down it."

I handed her a cup of luke-warm tea with a suitably grave expression.

"It wasn't a flute at all, really," said Mrs. Venner. "It was more of a pickle-oh. It fell in the fire in the finish." She sipped reflectively, and then fished out a tea-leaf with her little finger. "Of course, mind you," she said, "there's worse things than being on the stage. Look at a steeplejack. You wouldn't get me up one of them ladders in the inside of a chimney for a big clock. My trouble is, I will keep looking down, and that's where you have to watch yourself, otherwise you're going to miss a rung."

"Yes," I said. "The life of a steeplejack—"

"Bear in mind," said Mrs. Venner, "I'm not saying I wouldn't do the same in Lucy's shoes. Half the time you don't know whether you're going to have to sell your wardrobe, and as soon as you do they want you for a duchess in a film. It's all very well having the theatre in your bones, but I've seen the time when she's made a tin of pilchards do a week, and what's going to become of you without starch?"

"Yes," I said, after a baffled pause. "Quite."

"I'd have been up and out of it long since," said Mrs. Venner, reaching for a chocolate biscuit and looking for the maker's name on the back, "and gone into a Food Office or on the telephones. At least you'd know where you are. As I told her, I said, you only live the once, I said, and it's up to you to put your best foot forward. Look at the time I went on the halls when I was seventeen. I never let that turn my head. Three weeks was enough for me, sitting on a swing and singing about blackbirds while somebody pushed you at the back and the lights went in and out. No, bluebirds. Drudgery, that's all that was. I'll show you my photo in Burnley, only there's some big fat lump of a girl plonked right in front of me, grinning all over her face. Besides, Lucy isn't even on the halls, and who wants to see a play nowadays, without a bit of a sing-song in it?

It was different when they had some go in them, like *The Ten-thirty Down Express*. But with all this Christopher Pie, or whatever, you might just as well stop at home and have a nice game of rummy."

"Well . . ." I said, leaning back judicially.

"Anyhow," said Mrs. Venner, banging her cup and saucer into the fireplace and sweeping crumbs from her lap with a gesture of finality that caught the table-lamp a glancing blow, "she's give it all up, and jolly good luck to her, I say."

"Oh yes," I said, rising swiftly to replace the lamp-shade, "I hope she—"

"She's giving a party to-morrow night," said Mrs. Venner, squeezing into her shoe and making heavily for the door, "to celebrate. And she says you'll have to take your own glass and do a bit of a turn if you want to go, because Mrs. Angers's dog rolled the last two down the stairs and we haven't found the stems yet, even if we knew how to stick 'em back on without them being cock-eyed. Oh yes," she said, opening the door, "it's a new life beginning for Lucy."

"Yes," I said. "It certainly looks—"

"Mind you," said Mrs. Venner, "nine agents have got her 'phone number, and if anything was to crop up that sounds worth while she'll get her fur coat back that she's sent to her ma, and be after it like a shot, you mark my words. Well, after all, as I said to her, she'd be a fool not to, wouldn't she?"

"Well, yes," I said, dazedly. "Although of course—"

"Cheerio," said Mrs. Venner.
ALEX ATKINSON

§ §

"Sir William Rootes, chairman of the Rootes Group, commented last night: 'Assuming that we can produce more cars, through more material being available, there should be more vehicles for export—and also for the home market.'—*Sheffield Telegraph*
The Group has got a good sound man there.



"I do hope those new people aren't going to be noisy."

PROBLEMATICAL

IT was very gratifying to be appointed Technical Consultant to *Civil, Mechanical and Electrical*, the new engineering journal that promises to be if anything ahead of its time.

"You'll do the Problems," the Editor informed me, referring to what was planned as an outstanding feature: Readers' Problems, with Helpful Answers.

"Supposing there aren't any?" I ventured, not wanting a sinecure.

"You'll do the Problems," the Chief repeated with no change of emphasis. And so for several weeks I revelled in designing dams and bridges, in winding transformers, and in airing generally my knowledge of applied science.

That was all very well, but quite soon I was scraping the bottom of the barrel, and I had just decided that it would be a nice change to have a real Problem to answer when one turned up.

And my word it was a snorter. I won't bore you with the details, but you may take it that it was the sort of thing that the Atomic Research Commission

might have got around to answering in a couple of months—provided they had one of those Electronic Computers to hand. I had the office slide-rule and two days before we went to Press, so the Answers to several Problems that week had to be deferred till our next issue.

Electrical, Mechanical and Civil, our rival in the journalistic field, has a *Queries and Replies* column—a thinnish milk-and-water affair, but still a service offered to their readers. I am one of their readers in my professional capacity, and it was the work of only a few moments to pop the Question into an envelope and to mail it off. Then all I had to do was to sit back and wait for their Reply to appear. Of course, I wrote from my home address; there was no point in telling our competitors too much.

That was a fortnight ago, and so far Queries and Replies has contained no direct reference to my Problem. They had a note last week, however, that several Queries had had to be held over owing to lack of space.

I hope they hurry up, because the matter seems to be one of greater importance and wider interest than I had suspected. Only this morning, curiously, we had exactly the same Question sent in again by another reader.



A SONG OF MIDDLE AGE

WHAT a very wonderful thing is middle age!
Glimly a man may watch its rising curtain,
Only to find he enters a wider stage
With a tread more certain.

Youth is a fine thing, but a trifle windy;
A bright fever plagues it, whatever it does.
As one approaches forty, the intolerable shindy
Sinks to a quiet buzz;

Hair may fall and rheumatics invade the shoulder,
Corns sprout on the toe and lumbago grip the
haunch,
But as the outer man begins to moulder
The inner grows more staunch.

The outer man betrays no more the inner's shrinking;
The inner shrinks no less, but no one knows;

What's more, the outer man can go on talking and
drinking
And let the inner doze.

Calmly in middle age the soul acquires,
And simultaneously loses, knowledge;
No need to quell, as once he quelled, the fires
Damped down at college.

They flicker on, as fierce and bright as ever,
But only light the world below the stairs.
Nobody asks whether he is or is not clever,
Since no one cares.

Now he may be himself, and that securely,
Nor ask the world permission for his way.
Hair greying and time shortening—this is surely
Small price to pay.

R. P. LISTER

THE COSMIC MESS

"NOT Cricket." The words are written in large gold letters on the walls of this column's soul. This column was the leading bowler at its private school (very slow, very cunning): it has made fifty-three (in a literary match): it has made eleven at the Oval (in a Parliamentary match). So it may fairly claim to be one of the Friends of Cricket, and it can confidently condemn any behaviour, in any field of life, which is "not cricket." But it is still reverently surprised by some of the deeds and customs which are classed as "cricket" on the cricket field. In the first Test Match against India the captain of England's team (how nice it is, by the way, to be able to write the word "England" with no fear of receiving harsh letters from angry Scots!) the English captain—but perhaps the sentence were better begun again. The wicket was wicket; the last Indian batsmen were being, as the papers say, "skittled" out. This column, in passing, wishes warmly that the papers would not say that. As a Friend of Skittles, it regards the expression as an insult to that ancient, skilful, and honourable game. As a Friend of Language, too,

it must observe that the metaphor is false and foolish. What the papers mean is that the Indian wickets are falling rapidly, but falling one by one: and the fielding side are applauded for this effort. But the skittle-player who knocks the pins down one by one is not highly regarded: indeed, he is no good. The prime purpose of the skittle-player is to knock all the pins down with one throw. He does not always do it, but he does it often: and the more pins he knocks down with a single throw the better he is pleased. The expression "skittled out," therefore, applied to a succession of quick wickets, is nonsense. It would mean something only if nine wickets fell to a single ball. Is that clear? Very well: let us return to the story. The English captain was not eager to bat on the wicked wicket at once, but he thought it would improve if it was given a little time for reflection and repentance. So (this column read in sundry papers) he told his bowlers not to be in too much of a hurry to get the last Indian batsmen out. They were, in other words, to forbear from deadly tricks, from sudden yorkers or inswingers, and

to bowl innocuously wide of the wicket. But an Indian bowler (one of the last two batsmen) thwarted all this by pulling an easy ball into his wicket, so that he, and all the side, were out.

Now, the facts may not have been as stated, in which case this column formally apologizes to all concerned. But the interesting thing (to this column, at least) was that no comment was made upon the facts as stated; the story was accepted as a normal episode in a game of cricket. Yet, in any other



amilly

field of activity, surely, such behaviour would be described as "not cricket." The English captain orders his men *not to do their best*, but for what purpose? That he and his men may not be exposed to the same natural difficulties as have done damage to his opponents. Is this "cricket"? Is this the kind of cunning that we teach to our innocent boys? Surely "the game is the thing," and it does not really matter who wins, so long as the game is played according to the highest principles? Very well, then.

But if, as it seems, all this is "cricket," where do we draw the line? The action of the Indian bowler must now be considered. Was it a happy accident that he pulled that ball into his wicket? Or did he, with shrewd Oriental instinct, detect the Englishman's design and get himself out on purpose? If so, was this "cricket"? In the circumstances, presumably, it was. But he might have gone farther. The Indian captain, seeing what the English captain was up to, might have told his last four batsmen to walk in quickly, beat their wickets down with their bats at the first ball, and come out at once. This would save much time: but would it be "cricket"? And the thing does not end there. The English captain would have a clever answer to the Indian captain. Runs not mattering at the moment, he could tell his bowlers to bowl nothing but no-balls. The Indians,

then, would not be able to get themselves out and would be thoroughly thwarted. Would that be "cricket"? If not, this column is quite unable to see why. Moreover, if they were wiles as well as no-balls they might all go to the boundary and take up a delicious lot of time. Would this be "cricket"? If not, this column is quite unable to understand why. But the uncountable readers will see what a mess you may get into if you depart from Nature's Rule One: "Do your best."

Then there was the queer affair (in another Test) of the great Mankad. (This column, by the way, does not belong to the First Names Familiarity Club, and will not refer to this fine cricketer as "Vino.") At the beginning of England's second innings, we were told, he took the new ball and "vigorously rubbed it in the dust, to take the shine off it." The purpose of this act is not clear to this column: it has always understood that bowlers liked the shiny new ball, and eagerly awaited its arrival. But that is not the point. Presumably Mr. M. did what he did to help his own bowling: and this column plaintively inquires again: "Was it cricket?" The ball is not the property of any bowler, it has been provided for the use of all the twenty-two players, and it should surely be used as the manufacturers made it, and wear and tear make it. If not, what else may a bowler do to it? Mud would be even more effective than dust, one would say. May a bowler, in rainy weather, wander about the field looking for muddy patches or nice juicy worm-casts? May he jump on the ball with his nailed boots, or cut little pieces out with a penknife? If not, why not? One violation of the ball is surely, in principle, the same as another. But is there no riposte? The bowler at the other end may like a shiny ball: so may the batsmen. It is "cricket," we know, for that kind of bowler to rub the ball on his trousers. But may he go farther? Can he keep in his pocket a soft cloth and a little tin of leather-polish? May the batsman have a go at the dusty ball between overs? This column, gazing darkly into the

future, seems to see the great Hutton coming out to bat with a little box full of red polish, brushes and chamois-leather. He gives it to the square-leg umpire, and from time to time he calls "Reece, my polishing-set, please." The bowler, no doubt, will have some devilish answer to that: but here the fancy halts, dismayed.

When six or seven gigantic fieldsmen crouch menacingly round the tiny bowler who comes in to bat last—shameless intimidation, physical and moral—this column mutters sadly to itself: "Is this cricket?" And, of course, it is. Indeed the grim conclusion is that there is more low cunning and malice afoot in cricket than in any other British activity. That is why it is such a good game. But is it "cricket"? A. P. H.

ESOTERIC

"THERE's the postman. Aren't you going to answer his ring?—My goodness! *Nylons!* From America! From John! Wasn't it nice of him?"

"Very. Do you think we have to pay?"

"Have to pay! These are nylons! Aren't they wonderful? Sixty gauge!"

"Sixty gauge?"

"Sixty gauge! The finest I've had is fifty-two!"

"You're delighted."

"Wouldn't you be? Goodness, and look—they're fifteen denier!"

"Fifteen denier?"

"Fifteen denier! The usual is thirty! I've never had a fifteen with more than a fifty-two gauge!"

"You don't seem to have done very well up to now. What are these gauges and deniers?"

"They mean the stockings are sheer."

"Sheer what?"

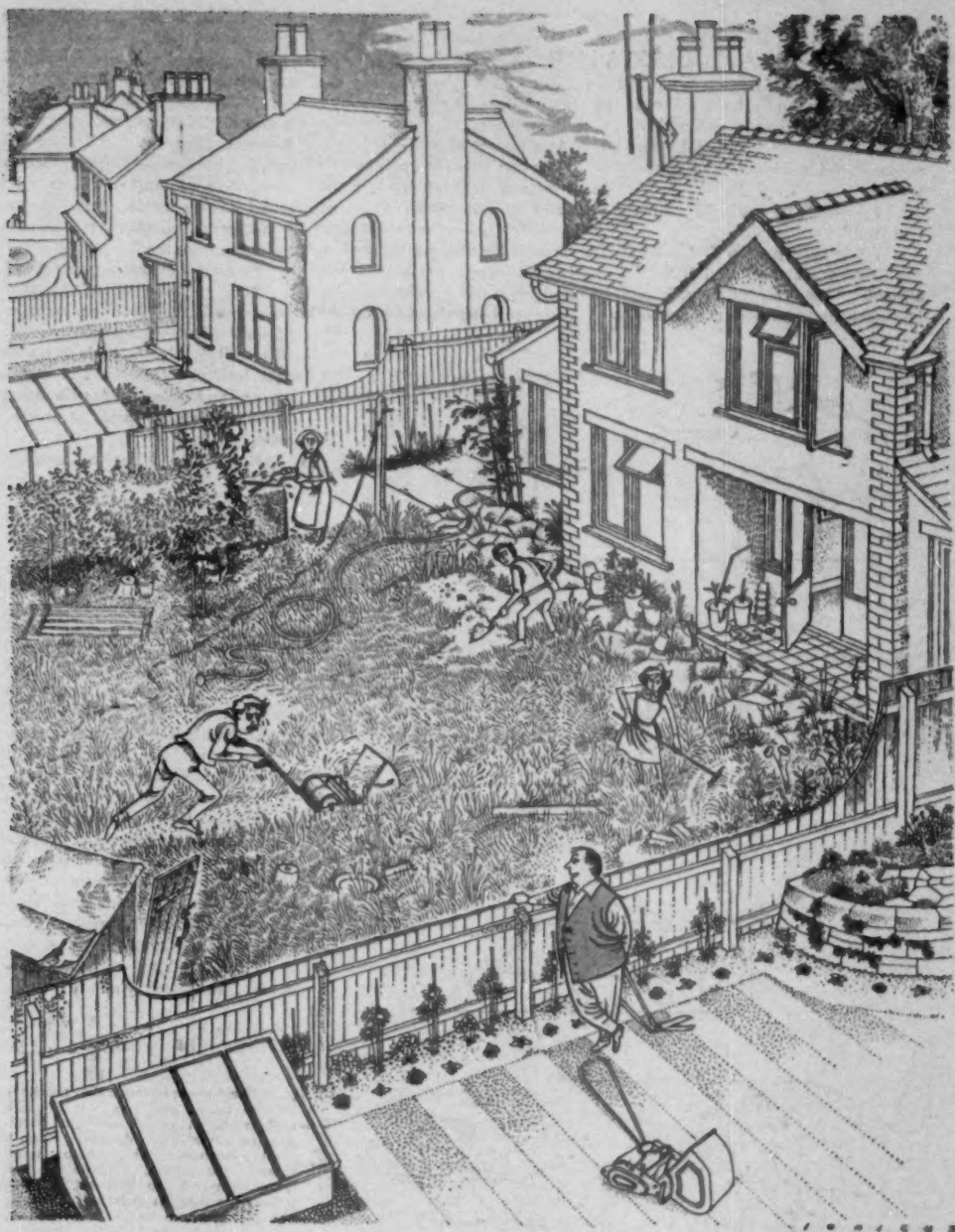
"Just sheer. You see the label on them—'First Quality'!"

"Where?"

"Don't touch! My goodness! Of course, I'll never dare to wear them!" G. A. C. WETHERIDGE



V.H. 72



"Television broken down?"

DISCLAIMER

HE was the only other person in the bar and he was huddled against the wall at the far end. Our eyes met and he suddenly broke the silence.

"I know," he said, "I know. I'm him."

"I beg your pardon?" I said.

"You don't need to tell me," he said. "You've read about him. The drab little man at the end of

the bar. Well—I'm him, but don't go getting ideas."

"As a matter of fact——"

"You don't need to explain. It's these writers. Think up a stock character to put across anything that nobody'd believe any other way. The drab little man at the end of the bar. Straggly moustache and haunted eyes. He's a character."

The man banged his fist on the

bar. "Well," he said, fiercely, "I've got haunted eyes."

He glanced at his reflection in the mirror behind the bar.

"Those eyes of yours, Ern," my wife says to me. 'Proper haunted, they are.' All right, all right. I got haunted eyes. But it's stomach, see? And drab I may be and I don't deny it. But I'm not a character, so don't you expect anything from me."

"I wasn't expecting anything."

"Oh yes, you were," he said belligerently. "Not consciously, perhaps. But subconsciously. All this reading. I'm the little man who gets into conversation and starts telling you some fantastic yarn while you buy me pints of beer to keep it going."

Resignedly, I put my hand in my pocket.

"Don't you dare!" he shouted. "Haven't I just been telling you? A straggly moustache I may have"

—he glanced at his reflection again

—"I don't deny that, either.

'Proper straggly, Ern, your moustache is,' my wife says to me. And I always tell her 'All right, all right. I got a straggly moustache and straggly's the way I happen to like it, see?' That shuts her up. And it had better shut you up too. I may have haunted eyes and a straggly moustache, but I'm no character, I've got no fancy yarns to spin and I buy my own beer."

He drank up, wiped the straggly moustache, glanced once more at the reflection of his haunted eyes and left, looking more drab than ever. The barmaid appeared from behind a bead curtain.

"Been talking to our character!" she asked, chattily.

§ §

"Check up in advance that you have all the things you need for a quick transformation either in your handbag or your desk drawer. You'll want: cleansing lotion, cotton wool, tissues, toothbrush, toothpaste, nail brush, soap, deodorizing tablets, eye lotion, eye bath, foundation, matching powder, make-up brush, eye shadow, mascara with two brushes, lipstick, lipbrush, cologne perfume, clothes brush."—*Woman's Own*

And someone waiting in the car.



IT'S SLOWER BY LIFT

"MALLOW and Marsh?" echoed the hall-porter. "They're on the fourth floor. There's a self-operating lift opposite or you can walk. You'd do better to walk."

"Four floors!" I said.

"That lift's tricky," he replied.

"I'm used to lifts," I said, and prodded the calling-button. The lift appeared at once. I smiled at the hall-porter—not patronizingly, but as if to imply that in my opinion a child could operate so simple a mechanism. But when I turned to enter the lift I found it had already departed.

"It's gone," said the hall-porter.

"You wasn't quick enough." This was hard to deny, so I said nothing and called the lift again.

The hall-porter sang among his letters. "Keep your finger on the button," he said gaily, "or you'll be here all day." I pushed my finger fiercely into the wall and held it there.

The lift arrived after some minutes, and this time I stepped inside without delay. I pressed the fourth-floor button. The lift shuddered uncertainly and then began a palsied descent to the basement. Through the ground-floor window I caught sight of the hall-porter slowly shaking his head.

We lurched to a standstill. Before I could reach the controls the doors opened and seven sturdy men and a wheelbarrow of cement entered with a rush. I was engulfed and pinned against a side wall. The man next to me put his lips to my ear and shouted "Where you going, guv?"

"He's going up," said a voice.

We stopped at the ground floor, and the man in charge of the wheelbarrow shouted "All out!" As the people behind me started to press forward I said "I don't want the ground floor." The next moment I was carried through the doors and into the hall. By the time I returned the lift had gone.

"I see you're back again," said the hall-porter.

"Yes," I said shortly.



"You're dead-set on riding up!"

"Dead-set," I answered.

"Well, I suppose I'd better help." His whole demeanour became brisk and masterful. "Listen!" he commanded, putting his ear to the door. "It's stopped at the third. Ah! Timms' voice. He's the upstairs messenger and he's taking the tea to the fourth." The ancient machinery rumbled.

"Caught him!" he said, and the lift stopped. "You see," he added in kindly explanation, "you can break the circuit by pulling down the door handle. Now to bring him down." He pressed the calling-button.

"Bring him down!" I said. "Couldn't we wait until he has finished his journey?"

"It saves time this way," the hall-porter pointed out.

"But do you mean he can't do anything about it?" I asked.

"He's got his hands full. Tray. He can't do a thing."

I was impressed at the hall-porter's grasp of the situation, but I still felt uneasy. "Do you think he'll mind?" I said.

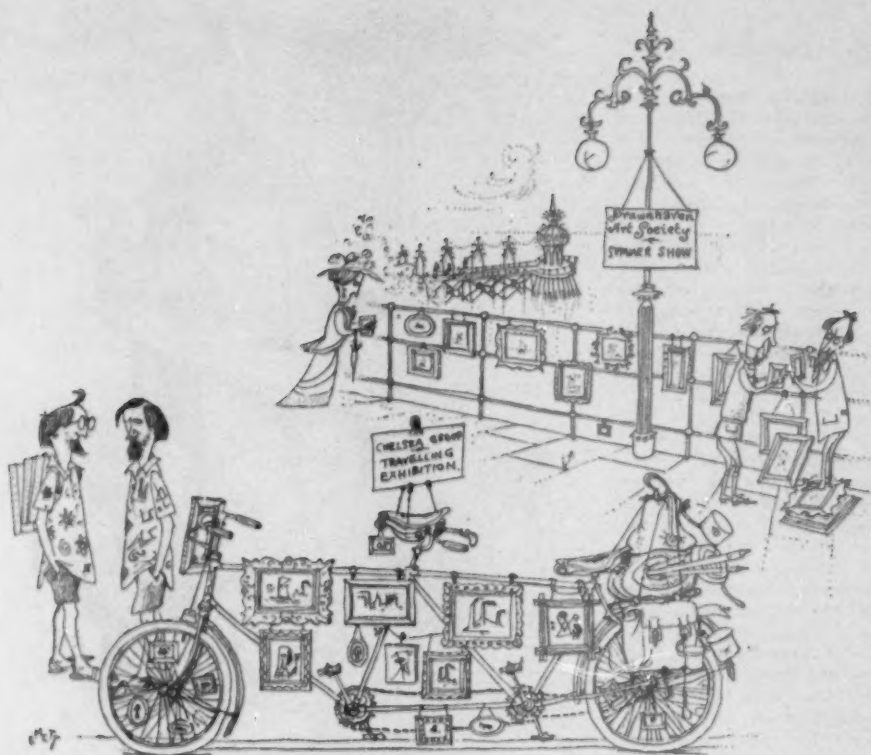
"Mind!" he said. "He'll be fuming."

We heard Timms' voice long before the lift arrived. There was no doubt that the unexpected change in the direction of the lift had annoyed him.

The hall-porter opened the doors. "Going up!" he inquired. Timms rushed out.

"You just wait until I put this tray down," he shouted. We moved speedily into the lift.

"Very poor sort," observed the



hall-porter. "He always carries on alarming when I do this to him. Can't stand a joke." At that moment the lift stopped with a jolt and started to move downwards.

"That's Timms," announced the hall-porter. "Watch the correct counter-move." He pressed the emergency stop, then the fourth-floor button. The lift ascended once again. The next ten minutes were devoted to move and counter-move, and the lift changed direction seventeen times. I was a little dazed, or I might have appreciated more fully the skill and cunning of both players. At the end of it Timms appeared to have tired. I was breathless. The hall-porter was triumphant.

"His tea's getting cold," he said. "I thought for a minute it was going to be stalemate."

"What next?" I asked.

"No need to worry now," said the hall-porter, "we're almost clear of the third already." Just then the lift stopped again. The hall-porter flew to the controls.

"We're stuck," he said at length. "It won't go." I decided to take the situation in hand myself, and rang the alarm bell.

"You've done it now," he said. "That'll bring the electrician up here and he'll create."

"Create what?" I asked coldly.

"Something awful," he replied.

The electrician was a man of slow reflexes, and half an hour passed before he sought the cause of the alarm. As he opened the door I bent down and put my face to the aperture between the bottom of the lift and the top of the doorway.

"We're stuck," I said.

"So that's it," he said. "I thought for a minute the cable had broke. You'd better squeeze through and climb down on my shoulders."

It was a difficult operation, but with the electrician dragging at my lapels and the hall-porter pushing mightily from the rear I emerged at last and tottered up the stairs. I knocked at the door of Mallow and Marsh. The secretary answered.

"I'm Clegg," I said. "I have an appointment—"

"I'm afraid the office is empty," she interrupted. "Both Mr. Mallow and Mr. Marsh left some time ago."

"I got stuck in the lift," I said.

"How odd," she remarked—and gave me a smile, as if to indicate that in her opinion a child could operate so simple a mechanism.

INDIRECT ADVERTISING

WHEN I heard that Lecoiffeur, who had been Pithknickle's agricultural-lime salesman for a number of years, had had a row with them and taken his hat, it gave me the opportunity of leaving Marvelime Ltd., who had never realized my true value.

The first farmer I called on for Pithknickle's fixed me with a shrewd blue eye. "Tell me, young man," he inquired, "when you were with Marvelime did you tell farmers that Pithknickle's were the best lime firm?"

I laughed this off, but it was the beginning of a sobering if not wholly unpleasant experience. I discovered, in fact, that I had been a better salesman for Marvelime than I had known, although I had never fallen into the error of underestimating myself as much as the directors had.

So well, indeed, had I built up that ungrateful firm that my chief task now, I perceived, was to undo my own work, remove Marvelime from the pinnacle on which I had, with some assistance at the production end, placed it, and so make room for Pithknickle's. For the first time in my business career I found myself my chief competitor.

That in itself would not have mattered, for I happen to be the type that enjoys formidable competition; but as I continued my calls I began to see that my chances of successfully defeating myself were nil. The problem was how to persuade farmers that I was perfectly reliable in advising them to have their lime spread by Pithknickle's, whilst conveying by a difficult nuance that I had been less than reliable in advising them formerly to patronize Marvelime.

Finally I confided in Lecoiffeur, who had taken on my old job.

"Frankly, Bert," I admitted, "I'm in a jam. No doubt it's my own fault for being too good a salesman."

"I'm sure it isn't your fault at all, old man," he said, with quick generosity.

"Funny thing," he sighed, when

I had outlined my impasse. "I'm in the same jam as you, for the same reason. Perhaps a bit more so than you. I've even thought of going back to Pithknickle's—but that's out of the question, of course."

"Nor can I go back to Marvelime," I acknowledged bleakly.

It was very fortunate, I think, that both firms agreed to Lecoiffeur's and my joint proposal.

For farmers, knowing me now as

Pithknickle's salesman, have the utmost confidence in any good word that I happen to let fall for Marvelime—as Bert's sales behind me attest. They are equally impressed, if my sales on his heels are any criterion, by Marvelime's representative's wistful eulogies, on the side, of Pithknickle's products and service.

It looks like being a record year for both companies.

QUESTION AND ANSWER

BREATHES there the Man with Soul so dead

Who never to himself hath said

"My Wife deserves a Day in Bed,

Poor thing, she's quite worn out;

The Household I will gladly run,

Will for the nonce the Office shun,

Forake my Desk and morning Bun

And set her Work about;

The Children's Playmate will I be,

Will get the Breakfast, Luncheon,

Tea

And Supper for the Family,

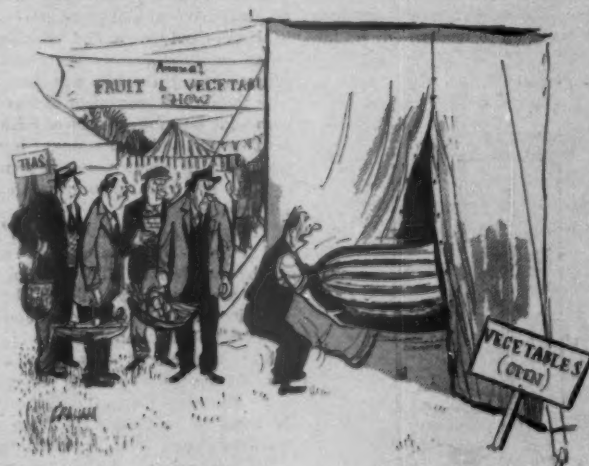
Will sweep and scour and stoke,

Will wash of Dishees ninety-four,
Of Laundry Items even more,
And with each Caller at the Door
Will crack a merry Joke;

Serene shall be my Day and bright
From dewy Morn to dewy Night,
A Cycle, yea, of calm Delight
And ordered Happiness;
While to my dormant wife accrues
More Energy than she can use;
I'll find her now and break the
news"?

Well, very likely, Yes.

ANDE



"Easy does it, lads! . . . Careful of that pole . . . steady . . . steady . . . !"

MORNINGS AT SEVEN

FOR several years now my newsagent has been spelling my name incorrectly. Every morning I glance hopelessly at the top right-hand corner of my newspaper and wince. There is something vaguely uplifting about seeing one's own name, one's correct name, written out in blue pencil at the top of a newspaper; and there is something utterly degrading about seeing one's name carelessly distorted. I have mentioned the matter to my newsagent several times, but it makes no difference. He is a surly, militant, independent devil, a monopolist of the worst kind.

He does not realize of course that his carelessness causes me endless trouble and no little embarrassment. I take my newspaper to the office; I read it on the train, and the people with whom I travel mispronounce my name because they have only the newsagent's written instructions to go on. When I fail to recognize my spoken name they look at me suspiciously—as though I have momentarily forgotten my latest alias.

I used to rub out the newsagent's blue pencillings before I left home, but modern newsprint does not stand up to modern erasers for

long and my paper was always very much the worse for wear when I reached the station. For a few weeks I drafted an imaginary dog whenever I unfolded the newspaper in public. My travelling companions and office colleagues remained puzzled, however. Some of them seemed to think that I was leading a double life; the rest, that I was robbing somebody's letter-box on my way to work.

Later I tried crossing out the newsagent's mark and writing my correct name underneath it, but even this move was misinterpreted. At the office it was assumed that I made a practice of collecting discarded newspapers from the train and passing them off as my own. No one actually said as much, but actions sometimes speak louder than words.

Naturally, I could not tell the newsagent of all these things. He would have laughed me out of the shop. I could only repeat my earlier protest . . .

I was at the shop early. He was standing behind the counter, and as soon as I saw him I knew that there would be some unpleasantness. Mr. Higson is never at his best unshaven, in slippers and braces, and smoking on an empty stomach. The atmosphere of the little shop was heavy with the bitter-sweet odour of fresh newsprint and ink: stacks of crisp newspapers and magazines lay neatly on the counter, and Higson and the boy were making up the daily round.

"*Express, Mirror and Woman*," said Higson with his eye on a grubby notebook. The boy collected the newspapers, flicked the magazine between their pages and placed the folded bundle before his master. Higson bent and scrawled a name in the top right-hand corner of the *Express*—just to the right of the *Crusader in Chains*. "*Times, Financial Times, Mail*," he barked. "Good morning," I said. "Just a small point. I wonder—"

Higson let his blue pencil clatter to the counter and looked up.

"I thought it wouldn't be long!" he said. "Must be a week or more since you last changed your order."

"I don't think—"

"No use denying it," he broke in. "All here in black-and-white." He flicked a finger and pushed at the pages of the notebook. "Here we are," he said. "February 14, *Mail* instead of *Chronicle*. March 24, *Herald* instead of *Mail* and cancel *Telegraph* for eight days. April 7, *Worker* for *Herald*. May 26, *Times* instead of *Telegraph*, *Chronicle* instead of *Worker*. July 21—"

"Surely," I said, "I've a perfect right to read which papers I like!"

"You and old Topham!" he said.

"What's Mr. Topham to do with it?" I said.

"Well, he's another of 'em. Chop and change, chop and change. Must think I've nothing better to do."

"As a matter of fact," I said, "I called on quite another matter. I wanted to draw your attention to the fact that there are two Ls in my name."

"You gone and changed it again then," he said.

"And I should be obliged if you would spell it properly in future."

"O.K., O.K." he said. "Two perishin' Ls. Anything else while we're about it? How about ordering the *Manchester Guardian* every other Friday?"

"No, that's all," I said with all the dignity I could muster.

"*Chronicle* and *Graphic*," he yelled. "Come on, boy, wake up! Haven't got all day!"

Half an hour later my newspaper crashed through the letter-box. In the top right-hand corner, heavily underlined, was the word "Topham."

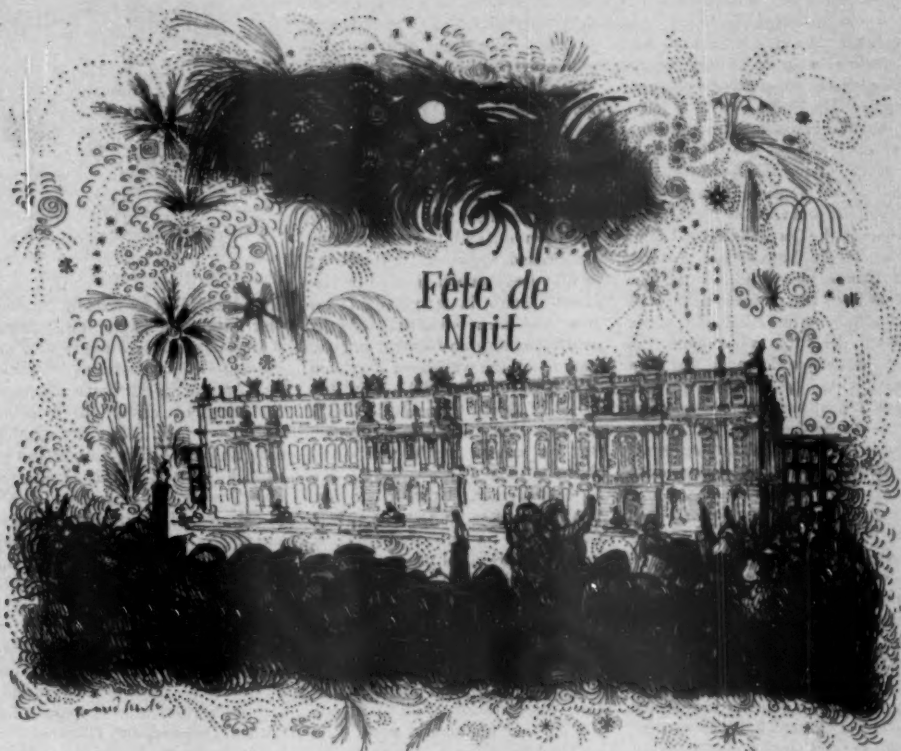
BERNARD HOLLOWOOD



Fascist Cannibals?

"Z-MEN COOKED FOR TERRITORIALS"

Surrey Comet



A SUNDAY NIGHT AT VERSAILLES

"*LA Fête a lieu quel que soit le temps,*" say the posters; and thirty thousand people take the risk of a soaking on one or other of the four Sundays in the year when there is a *Fête de Nuit* at Versailles. "*C'est admirable! c'est féérique! c'est prodigieux!*" says the programme that you buy from a special constable as you push through the gate; and Dominie Sampson's favourite adjective is the most appropriate of the lot.

We, the audience, spread ourselves in a half-moon around the Bassin de Neptune (*Places Debout*, three to five bob; *Places Assises*, ten to fourteen; *Réservées*, twenty-five shillings). Three rows in front, with his family, is an American

general from SHAPE; behind us on our port quarter some Italians; on our starboard quarter another American family, whose small boy's comments are to enliven our evening; all the rest in earshot are French. The evening darkens, and we remember the promise of our programme: "*La Fête commence a la chute du jour.*" Our eyes focus on the descending ride in the woods opposite, which is the Water Alley running down to Neptune's Basin from the Palais and the Parterre du Nord. We Versailles of a year's standing, proud in our local knowledge and patronizing towards mere tourists, can just distinguish the north-eastern shoulder of the Palais silhouetted against the sky. (Take

no notice of the artist's geography; artists are entitled to have "impressions," and move great blocks of masonry about as if they were rabbit-hutches. We writers must stick to the facts.)

"Ah, momma, when's it gonna start?" asks the American boy behind us.

Half-left, across the water, the huntsmen from Rambouillet suddenly begin to play on their *cors de chasse*, their red coats just visible. They are playing the *Rendez-vous de la Marquise*, and everybody who knows it says "Ah!" My wife and I say "Ah!", partly because we have lived a year in Versailles and want to demonstrate that we know what's what; partly because we like the

tune anyway; and partly because nobody with the smallest fraction of a soul could help liking that lovely air. We give it the same sort of grateful gasp as Scottish people give when they hear pipers beginning to play "My Home."

On the broad platform projecting out across the Bassin de Neptune, above the dark reclining shadow of Neptune himself and Amphitrite and their attendant sea-monsters, the Corps de Ballet begins to dance. Me, I am no balletomane, but this is wonderful. True, one knows from two or three seconds of preliminary growl that the music drifting over the water from the loud-speakers originates from a gramophone; but in our present mood it seems to come from Prospero—out of the trees, out of the historic earth, out of the fountains. Le Nôtre himself, strolling over there in the groves which he designed, might be cocking an ear and beating time to it; Marie Antoinette might be leaning out of the windows of her pathetic little dummy hamlet a few hundred yards to the north-west and humming, with Lalo beside her. Not even the bewildered little black dog scampering, amid sniggers, away from the sudden lighting dispels our illusion. Delicate, light as moths, precise as marionettes, go the flood-lit dancers, in minuet and tambourin and gavotte, while the moon rises over the market where my wife buys cheese and butter three times a week.

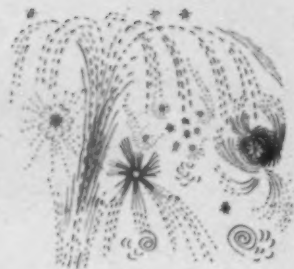
Other dancers take their places: one like an enormous bat; another apparently consumed (thanks to lighting the like of which I have never seen) in whirling flames, and then a group dancing *Sorcellerie* to Rachmaninoff's music. They appear at first as a single dancer, shot with lights at knee and elbow, head and foot; then they draw apart and there are eight of them, with their shadows huge and grotesque against the light-green trees, reminding one of the totem-dance in *Rose Marie*, of skeletons dangling in a row, of the old country-dance of Scottish Reform; and there comes from behind us the first note of mis-giving from Junior: "I wanna go home now!"

Junior is happier during the next dance—ten girls fluttering like very pale primroses. The lights are brighter; the trees are more in evidence than before, less like cardboard, more like parsley. ("What's gonna come next!")

The scene darkens for a moment, and then all down the Water Alley and all along the front of Neptune's Basin the fountains suddenly spring. They offer their first weak jets to the evening, and then, as though encouraged, surge swiftly to twenty or fifty feet—one cannot be precise about heights in fairyland. They grow and turn blood-red, like the garden-fountain in *Hassan*, and one fears to see the wraiths of Pervaneh and Rafi. "Oo-o-oh!" says the crowd of thirty thousand. "Let's go 'way right now," says Junior. But his parents won't, and small blame to them.

Poor Junior. Up roar the first of the rockets, splitting at their zenith into a hundred shreds, screaming down, splitting and splitting again into a myriad colours. Up go the little spinning tadpoles, to burst all over the warm blue August night sky. "Look!" says Junior's father, "the Moon isn't frightened; she's watching." "So she is," says Junior; "all the same, let's go 'way home right now."

There were never such fireworks as these. The Fourth of June at Eton flickers as wanly in memory as the Northern Lights. Here are crinolines of light fifty feet wide, which seem still wider in their reflections in the water. Here is a waterfall of fire two hundred yards



long, illumining for the first time the thirty thousand happy faces (20,999 if one remembers Junior) who are sharing our delight—though Neptune and Amphitrite for some reason at this moment change to a sullen beetroot colour. Here are a thousand missiles tearing through the air with a noise like the ripping of Smee's calico. There above us are the trails of burnt-out devices, hanging in the air like great grey starfish, while on the ground the glades devised for Marie Antoinette turn red and green and purple, gold and silver. At the top of the Water Alley, approving our revels, changing colour with our moods, stands Girardon's Fountain of the Pyramid, with its various tiers supported by Tritons, Dolphins and Lobsters.

At home in England we have no such setting for illuminations as Versailles affords. Hampton Court is well enough, and the Thames, with the Houses of Parliament as a back-cloth, plays its part nobly on the rare occasions (the Victory celebrations, for instance) when the British let off rockets in a big way; but for the real marriage of the elements fire and water—with earth and air as ushers—Versailles is the place.

Promptly at a quarter past eleven Girardon's lobsters turn to the appropriate shade of red for the last time; the final *Feu de Joie* shoots up many-coloured from beyond the dripping head of Neptune; and the crescendo importunities of Junior are rewarded at last.

Dominie Sampson has the last word. It is prodigious. Let no one miss it who can ever go.

BERNARD FERGUSON



at the PLAY

Albert, R.N. (SAVILLE)—The Step Forward (STRAND)

ALBERT looks a little like a ventriloquist's life-size doll. In any music-hall this bland, rigid, rather aloof type, in naval uniform, would be cross-talking on (or near) his master's knee. In *Albert, R.N.* he has a more responsible task. He is the queerly realistic dummy constructed (in a German camp for naval prisoners-of-war) to mask escape and to fog the guards. Certainly he is the hero of a serviceable play, by Mr. GUY MORGAN and Mr. EDWARD SAMMIS, that re-creates one of the most surprising escape stories of the war.

It is better, perhaps, to say that the authors have described the preparations for escape, and the aftermath. The event itself, with its smuggling of Albert, piecemeal, to the bath-house, and his return in majestic march, can only be reported. Here Mr. MORGAN and Mr. SAMMIS have taken a risk. If they fail to animate the discussions, and to catch the atmosphere of "Marling V," their play must be a dead loss and Albert himself merely a dummy among dummies. As it is, they have managed reasonably well in a straightforward way, though I am sure they would admit their debt to the actors: to such men as Mr. LAIDMAN BROWNE, whose style and

urbanity distinguish the senior naval officer ("I couldn't put up with myself if it were not for my amiable disposition"); Mr. HUGH BURDEN as Albert's creator, a young man given—tiresomely sometimes—to soul-searching; and Mr. HUGH LATIMER as a schoolmaster who takes life gravely. And, of course, to Albert, who waits in splendour, gazing pop-eyed into space: a happy nonentity without a care, even when his head is whipped off, as it is liable to be at any moment. Mr. JOHN WORSLEY, his maker, knows the breed.

The dummy in *The Step Forward* is an author—acted tactfully by Mr. GUY ROLFE—who sits in Magnolia Cottage, writing an elaborate work on an obscure French poet, a pupil of Ronsard. In these hard times, when publishers and authors moan, it is odd to meet somebody who is preparing for his book to be issued in two editions, one in English, one in French, and who knows several publishers ready to do them. I cannot believe that the work will succeed. Its author is fiercely portentous about it; but it is not the kind of thing that emerges from a Magnolia Cottage in Essex.

Otherwise, this is a mild invention, by Miss ANNE TREGO, about an unsophisticated young woman who leaves her husband because he wants her to be more sophisticated. She duly returns to him after a spell as secretary at Magnolia Cottage, where she takes the "step forward" of the title. (The author has a brisk "wolf" of a younger brother, a Man of the World who is in the advertising business.) The play is thinly constructed: its merit is Miss TREGO's



[The Step Forward]
Mary Silver—Miss FRANCES HYLAND

pleasant sense of humour. Possibly the best thing is the sight of Mr. DEREK FARE in restive anguish while Miss ALEXIS FRANCE reads in the original, and with Scots expressiveness, a poem by Ronsard. Miss GILLIAN LIND, as the author's wife who seems to find the routine at Magnolia Cottage wearing (we cannot blame her), and Miss SHEILA KEITH, as a "rep" actress with a voice like Flecker's "great bell swinging in a dome," help matters along. But much of the evening depends on Miss FRANCES HYLAND as the secretary. Her freshness and spirit never wane.

Recommended

As a strong straight play, *Winter Journey* (St. James's), with Mr. Michael Redgrave's detailed character study; as an agreeable puzzle, the complexity of *Dial "M"* for *Murder* (Westminster); and, for cheerful light entertainment, the "amalgam" of *The Globe Revue* (Globe). J. C. TREWIN



Hauptmann Schultz—Mr. FERDY MAYNE
Geoff. Ainsworth—Mr. HUGH BURDEN
Jim Road—Mr. HUMPHREY LESTOCK

at the PICTURES

Mandy—Son of Paleface

SOME people will eagerly make for a picture that is called *Mandy* (Director: ALEXANDER MACKENDRICK) and has a big part for a small girl, and others will firmly stay away from it for what might be called the same reasons in reverse. Both groups will be misguided. It is a good film, with infinitely more to offer than the sort of charm that pleases the first group, and practically no hint of



[Mandy

Mandy—MANDY MILLER

the starry-eyed whimsicality that irritates the second. It is documentary with a fiction base, and such faults as it may have I think arise from a too determined striving after tension and suspense in the fictional situations. The subject itself has in it plenty of emotional power of a different kind, and although the screenplay (by NIGEL BALCHIN and JACK WHITTINGHAM) is skilfully done and the contrived anxieties and excitements get over quite powerfully in their way, they are essentially on a lower and less valuable plane than those that are closer to the truth. The theme, as you must already know, is the education of children congenitally deaf who would also, without such skilled and loving attention as is

demonstrated here, be in effect dumb and practically cut off from all communication, all normal life. The story traces what happens to one such child, Mandy, from her parents' first horrified discovery of her affliction to the day years later when, watching with anxiety as some neighbouring children carelessly ask her name, they hear her manage to pronounce it. This miracle has been brought about by training at one of the schools for deaf children (there was a year or so ago a feature article in these pages about a London one). The most fascinating and moving scenes in the picture were made in reality at such a school, and most of the other children shown, a normally happy and mischievous lot, were really pupils at it. To blow the story up to feature length we have not only the natural and possibly typical domestic troubles and difficulties of the parents but also—less justifiably, as I suggest—an intrigue by a minor villain to get the school's head dismissed, badinage among divorce solicitors, and so forth. I don't say this embroidery isn't entertaining and well done, but in a sense it seems unworthy of a film with its roots in genuinely stirring reality. MANDY MILLER is impressively good as the young heroine, and of the grown-up players PHYLLIS CALVERT does particularly well as her mother; but most important of all is the theme.

One doesn't of course look very hard for aesthetic merit or intellectual content in a Bob Hope picture, and one knows perfectly well that the presence of either in a Bob Hope picture cooked up as a sequel to an earlier success, like *Son of Paleface* (Director: FRANK TASHLIN), would be a meaningless though startling coincidence. All the same it is in a way saddening to watch Mr. HOPE, who can be exceedingly funny in a reasonably human way, becoming more and more involved

with purely mechanical gags that would be almost as effective if he were nothing but a lay figure. There is some good Hope clowning in this crazy burlesque Western, but there is also too much literally mechanical contrivance, of the kind that makes heads disappear or ears puff steam. JANE RUSSELL is there again, and so is "Buttons and Bows" for that matter (a shade flat in places, I thought); not to mention Trigger, "smartest horse in the movies," and his master ROY ROGERS, who is noticeably concerned to show his amusement at being in such queer company.

* * * * *

Survey
(Dates in brackets refer to *Punch* reviews)

Two more of the new ones in London are *Clash by Night*, a "powerful" triangle melodrama made interesting by technical skill, and *The Thing from Another World*, "science-fiction" that hardly seems to need its "X" certificate.

The only notable release is the naval story *Gift Horse* (30/7/52), though *Mara Maru* (2/7/52) is a bright South Seas thriller with some amusing dialogue.

RICHARD MALLETT

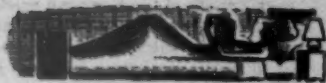


[Son of Paleface

Young (Paleface) Potter—BOB HOPE



Booking Office



A Second and Two Firsts

The Seasons' Difference. Frederick Buechner. *Chatto and Windus*, 11/6

Clara. Lonnie Coleman. *Gollancz*, 12/6

The Garden. Martin Mewburn. *Hogarth Press*, 10/6

THE second novel of a writer whose first has been of conspicuous quality invites a particular scrutiny. Will it be as good or not so good as its predecessor, or will it be still better? Yet what really matters, of course, is that it should succeed on its own merit, as a positive, not a comparative, achievement. And this, whatever its standing in relation to "A Long Day's Dying," *The Seasons' Difference* quite unquestionably does. It may not be everybody's book: there is in it an element of fantasy, a "strangeness in the proportion," which may irritate the addict of the matter-of-fact. But it is just that which to others will give it its attraction.

The scene is a country house and garden somewhere in America; the season is high summer; and the whole story, which is of little more than a week's duration, is set against a background, and impregnated with the spirit, of sunlit lawn and woodland. The *dramatis personae* are sophisticates and children—and Peter Cowley, the children's holiday tutor, who has seen a vision, or is convinced that he has, and insists that his adult companions shall share his experience. From Peter's urgency, and from the equal determination of the children to take their own part in the adventure, a part conceived with the diabolical ingenuity of their years, there evolves a dramatic entertainment—the phrase is deliberately chosen—which is at once, and with perfect congruity, a pastoral, a morality and a comedy of manners. It is also a subtle study in contrasts and clashes of character, in which the children are as completely realized and differentiated as the rest—the younger ones pursuing the logic of their own unpredictable conventions and the two older boys already aware, at fourteen, of the complexities of sentiment and self-mockery.

The Seasons' Difference is, in the original sense of the word, a brilliant book. It shines—and shines by virtue of its author's felicitous artistry. Mr. Frederick Buechner is a virtuoso, delighting, with no affectation of modesty, in the exercise of his craftsmanship. And he communicates his delight; for one cannot but take pleasure in observing the exactitude with which each convoluted sentence is brought to its appointed end and reveals the plenitude of its meaning, or how it radiates, with quite extraordinary intensity, its peculiar atmosphere.

Of two first novels neither suggests that a new star has been born. Mr. Lonnie Coleman is, like Mr. Buechner, an American, but he is like him in little else. The manner of writing which Mr. Coleman prefers is

the unbraced and conversational, even the slangy. Like Defoe, Richardson, Diderot and Mirbeau before him he has elected to tell his story in the person of a woman—not the *Clara* of his title, a coloured woman who is the mother of the narrator's husband's son, but one Lilian Sayre, who has the misfortune to marry a dipsomaniac. For this, no doubt, she should be pitied; yet so mean and vulgar is her mentality, and so little is she enlarged by her experiences, that it is difficult to sustain an interest in her destiny. Her story is not without its small-town humours; the trouble is that, while Lilian herself is so unattractive, the people who surround her are machine-made.

The people in *The Garden*, on the other hand, would appear to have been made up as Mr. Martin Mewburn went along. They lack the consistency of fundamental conception. The story has quite a promising opening, with all its characters neatly disposed about the garden (in the Notting Hill district) round which they live. But the situation which develops among them is very artificially contrived and disbelief is not easily suspended either in the young man from Paris or in the suburban *femme fatale* who between them make most of the mischief. The children, if not quite up to Mr. Buechner's, are more convincing.

FRANCIS BICKLEY

Emily Dickinson. Richard Chase. *Methuen*, 16/-

Faced with the contention that an obscure mid-nineteenth-century poetess stands "perhaps with Whitman" at the top of American poetic achievement and is "the greatest of women poets," the English



"Guess what—ginger beer runs off our backs as well."

reader—conscious of the European prestige of Poe and of his own country's claims to the Pierian Cup (Ladies' Finals)—can only leave Professor Chase of Columbia College to justify American opinion. He has hardly done this; but he has written a charming and accomplished biography of an unattractive woman and predominantly mediocre poet. Self-centred, callous, facetious—and according to her chief poetic abettor, Colonel Higginson, "partially cracked"—Emily Dickinson lived and died a spinster recluse just outside the striking New England culture of her day. She suffered cruelly from her inability to reconcile Calvinism and poetic inspiration; and from a secret passion for a wedded minister. Her technique tends to be that of an emancipated Dr. Watts; but the "attar" she distilled from domestic life is now and again Wordsworthian.

H. P. E.

The Illustrated Man. Ray Bradbury. *Rupert Hart-Davis*, 11/6

These sixteen tales by the author of "The Silver Locusts" are themselves as astonishing as any of the wonders recounted by the writer. It is true that the quality of art depends on the treatment, and not the choice, of subject; but to take the paraphernalia of "science-fiction," the rocket-ships, the robots, the great engines, the cosmic wars and galactic explorations that properly belong to the American "comic" and film-serial, and fashion from them stories delicate and sensitive as Fauré's songs or Cézanne's water-colours,

is a very considerable achievement. It is hard to speak with restraint of these extraordinary tales; though perhaps the cumulative effect of reading straight through them is less than it was with "The Silver Locusts," where all the stories were linked in subject, the best of them—"Zero Hour," "The Playground," "Usher II"—raise Mr. Bradbury to a secure place among the best imaginative writers of the day.

B. A. T.

The Englishman Makes Music. Reginald Nettel. *Dobson*, 18/-

The relationship between an art and the social soil to which it must, for the time being, adapt itself or perish, is a profitable and instructive study, provided that the theme in hand—presumably, from the title of the book, the general practice of music in this country—is kept firmly in the centre of the stage. If the background takes precedence though, as it does here, the result is a disappointment to the reader. The psychological basis for Methodism's rapid growth ("Englishmen of a depressed occupation were able to convince themselves that death was a triumph over the wickedness of this world") and the progress of the Industrial Revolution are fully discussed, via a mass of statistical information indicative of praiseworthy industry on the part of the author. But the general effect is still one of negation of the hopes raised by the pleasant-sounding title, and the distance of a few days' reflection rather lends weight to this impression than enchantment to the view.

J. D.

SHORTER NOTES

The Ballad of the Sad Café. Carson McCullers. *Cresset Press*, 15/-. Collected stories and short novels, several not previously published over here. Sensitive, haunting and very efficient studies of dream and reality in America. Subject matter includes small towns, adolescence and the Army. The delicacy of the prose does not soften the firmness of the narrative and characterization.

Chance Acquaintances and Julie de Carneilhan. Colette, translated by Patrick Leigh Fermor. *Sacker and Warburg*, 12/6. Two short novels of Colette's maturity, now translated (excellently) for the first time and published in one volume. The acute character-drawing lends the plots more importance than they intrinsically possess; but the real joy is in the warm quality of the writing, especially in *Mme. Colette's* way with sensual things like food, wine, clothes, furniture and the human body.

The River Conway. Wilson MacArthur. *Cassell*, 12/6. A pageant of Welsh history unfolds as Mr. MacArthur travels with his river, reflected in whose lovely waters are the ancient battlements and deep-rooted traditions of a people to whom, as to the author, life and work are synonymous terms. An expertly written book of charm and distinction, beautifully illustrated.

Top of the Bill. Ian Bevan. *Muller*, 18/-. Anecdotal history of the London Palladium. Full of odd, fascinating detail about the finance and mores of the Variety world: e.g. when Miss Gracie Fields sings "Sally" on the stage, loud-speakers relay it to the dressing-rooms. Intimate accounts of Norm Bayes, Danny Kaye, Val Parnell and innumerable other stars and impresarios.

Murder by Proxy. Helen Nielsen. *Gollancz*, 9/6. Very well-built whodunit with the pace and unexpectedness of a good thriller. A down-and-out in Chicago recovers consciousness to find five thousand dollars in his pocket and blood on his coat. He has also acquired a rich wife and a murdered father-in-law. All this by page twenty-three and there is much more to follow.



"Oh, you'll soon get used to it, Mrs. Tranter—
scrapping toast's just a knack, like everything else."

THE BABE AND THE BABY

It was a delicious novel, guaranteed to take my mind far away from the troubles of our time. *He put his thick scarred fingers round her throat, I read. "I love the cool touch of your hands," Cornelia said. The telephone started to ring. I let it. "I know you didn't kill your husband," Strabloff said, and laughed, "because I did."*

The telephone went on ringing. I felt exasperation mounting within me. All right, I thought, whoever you are, you've got yours coming to you right now. I went into the hall and grabbed the receiver.

"Japanese Consulate, Rochdale," I said, speaking in sing-song.

"Listen!" said my popsie. "Is that you?"

I felt cheated. I had wanted to play. Now an urge to be awkward grew inside me. "No speak Americano," I said.

"Don't be silly," said my popsie. "Listen! I'm outside Audrey's."

I know you didn't kill your husband, because I did. It worried me. Was it grammatically correct? I know that your husband was not killed by you because I did. Did what? "What are you doing there?" I asked. Your husband is dead. You didn't kill him. I am aware of this. I hit him on the head with a bust of Napoleon III.

"She's asked me to tea," said my popsie. "Some of the other girls are coming. Do you mind?"

"Do I mind what?" I said, temporizing. It was too staccato—impure Hemingway. *I know your husband was not killed, that is to say, by yourself. I am aware of this because, being extant, that is to say, co-existent, present at the occasion of his bludgeoning, admission of my own exertion becomes inevitable, and therefore official. (Elizabeth Bowen having a nervous breakdown.)*

"Do you mind looking after the baby?" said my popsie.

"Which baby?" I asked. What was she talking about? Always raving about babies.

"Stephen," said my popsie.



"Well, I'm not budging from here until I understand it."

"What's the matter with you? Is he all right?"

"Oh, yes," I said. "He's fine." She was talking about *our* baby, who was in the garden.

"What's he doing?" she asked.

"I don't know."

"Why don't you know?"

"Because I'm answering the telephone."

"Oh, you are silly," she said.

"I know you can't see him now, but what was he doing last time you looked?"

"Sleeping," I said.

"You sound doubtful," said my popsie.

"What are you doing?"

"I'm answering the telephone," I said.

"I know *that*," said my popsie.

"What were you doing before you answered the telephone?"

"Reading a book," I said.

"I thought so," she said. "You haven't looked at him for hours. Go and see what he's doing. I'll wait."

Stephen had kicked everything overboard and was lying in his pram singing. On the way back to the telephone I picked up the novel and read the next two lines. *"That was thoughtful of you, Strabloff," Cornelia said. "Will you have a cigarette?"*

I picked up the telephone.

"He's asleep," I said.

My popsie seemed disappointed.

"Well, he shouldn't be," she said.

"It's his hour for making a noise so that he will be tired and sleep through the night."

"I'll wake him up and play with him," I said. *Will you have a cigarette?* That was the bit that

baffled me. Perhaps Cornelia felt that cigarettes would give additional poise to the social occasion. After all, it wasn't easy for the man to confess that he had walloped her husband with an *objet d'art*. It isn't every woman who appreciates the subtlety of that sort of thing.

"Yes," said my popsie. "When you've done that, give him a bath. Don't make his feel too hot. I won't be very late."

"I'll do all that," I said. "How late will you be? Shall I come to fetch you?"

"Don't be silly," said my popsie. "I can look after myself."

"Listen!" I said. "If anyone offers you a cigarette, accept it but don't smoke it."

"What on earth are you talking about?" she asked.

Reefers! That was it. Cornelia would get Strabloff into a trance and then call the F.B.I. *Happiness sucked through the throat: the soothing stupefaction: the mounting violence shrugged away: the bludgeons: the hospital bed: matron furious: destruction accumulated like a habit.* (When in doubt imitate Graham Greene.)

"Aren't you going to say anything?" asked my popsie.

"We'll get it analysed," I said. "Get who analysed?" my popsie shrieked.

"The cigarette," I explained. "Listen!" said my popsie. "Do you love me?"

"Three minutes," said some jealous female.

"Yes," I said, "but that's not the point."

"Well, why didn't you say so?" my popsie said.

I went into the garden. The baby was asleep.

"Do you want a bath," I said, "or shall I finish my book?"

There was no answer. "If you don't answer," I said, "I shall presume a negative reply."

Strabloff did not smoke. Pity.

FLY-TIER

HUGE brown fingers, silk-scrabbling, tinsel tangled,
'Seyes screwed exclude, look, floating feather-
flecks,

Wheezily intent, badger-quiet but for the éx.

Ah, the quick, fierce éx.

Pletive for flinching flesh, plier-pinched, scissors-
mangled;

Snail slow, shépherd sure, old Tom bends to the hook.

(Seventy years on the river—not act.

Ually on it—beside it, in fact)

See his, light as a feather, force,

Twist-twine-turn 'smutinous horse.

Hair round the end o' the shank. Lóx!

'Sfinished! All ended, áll, past paring o' knife!

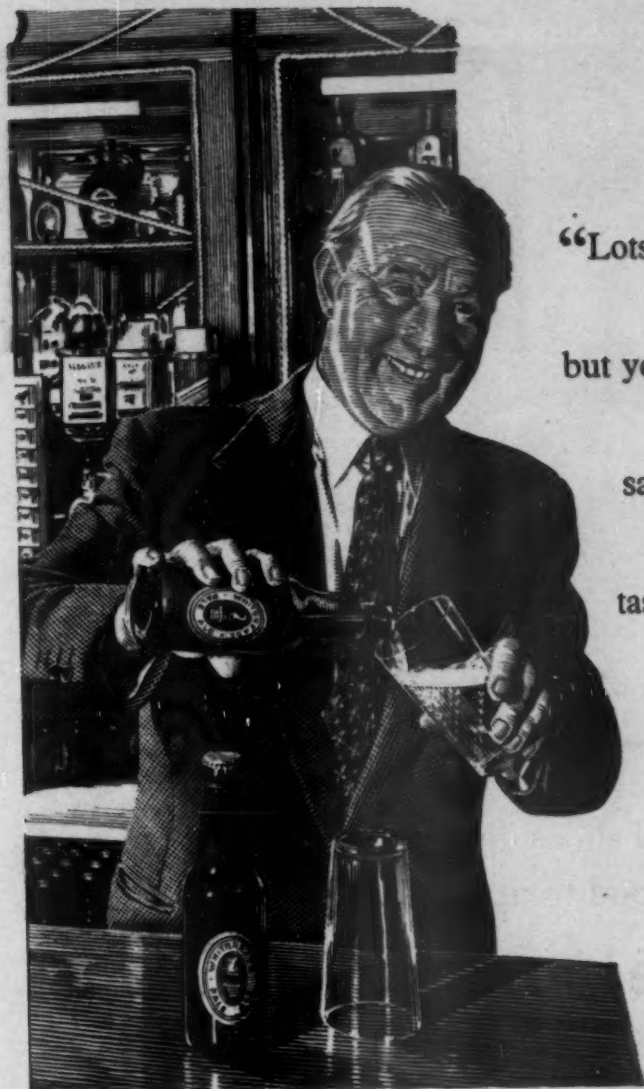
Jock Scott, Silver Grey, Alexandra, or Thun-
Der-and-Lightning? Ah well, heaven help us, it's done,
And you never saw such a mess in your life.

T. S. WATT



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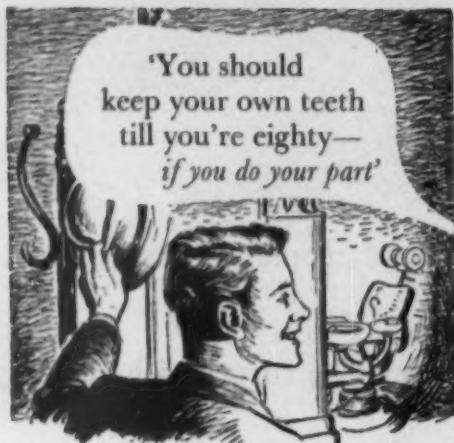
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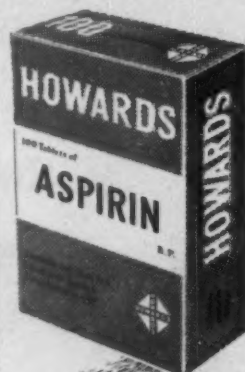
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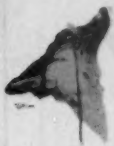
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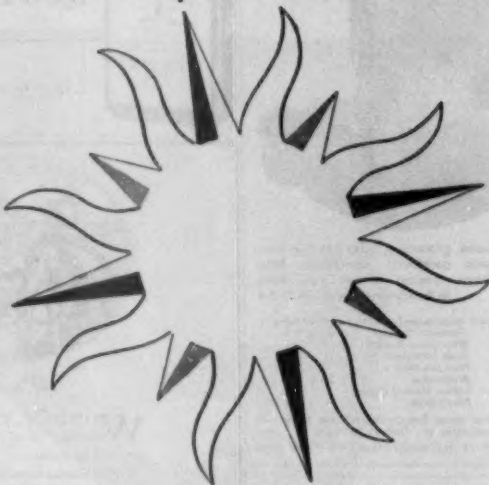


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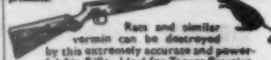
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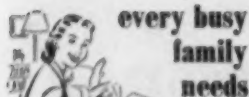
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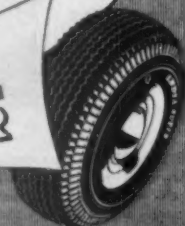
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